

IN THREE CENTURIES

THE STORY OF THE BAKER FAMILY

BY

©WENDY BAKER

(OCTOBER 2020)

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INTRODUCTION

When I first met Harry James Baker I was merely his eldest son John's girlfriend. But the moment I met Harry I knew that this was a special person – warm, welcoming, courteous and dignified.

He truly was my “other dad” and I came not only to love him dearly but also to have an enormous respect for him.

However, it was not until John and I were helping him sort through his possessions prior to his move from the big house at Petrel Avenue, Victor Harbor, to an independent-living unit, that I realised what a wonderful wealth of material he had accumulated over the years. Meticulous diaries dating from 1981, thousands of photographs, some of which dated back to the 1800's, and copious quantities of documents and family letters, all helped detail my father-in-law's life and history.

The discovery of a tiny hymnal with the name “George Baker, 1884” written in a boyish hand on the flyleaf, encouraged me to look further.

What began as an attempt to safely store old photographs turned into a much larger project. Much of the information is anecdotal, taken from talking with other family members. I have had the pleasure of “meeting” the adult children of Harry's cousins in England through letters and the internet and they have been able to help with names and dates. Much has been gleaned from official papers. Put simply, I have done my best.

Harry's story, as far back as can be verified, spreads across three centuries and six generations, from his paternal grandfather George Samuel Baker, through his father Harry Samuel and the strong Sykes influence of his mother Florence, to my husband John James Baker, to his son Mark James Baker and *his* son Ayden Francis Baker.

Harry's story lives on, through his grandchildren – Mark Baker and his sister Valerie Bubner (nee Baker); his daughter Pam's children Katherine Capogreco (nee Tiggemann), Jodie Willis (nee Tiggemann), and Christopher Tiggemann. Then there are his great-grandchildren – Isabella Pamela Capogreco, Carmen Grace Bubner, Lucy Robyn Bubner, and Ayden Francis Baker.

It is for these people and hopefully future generations that I have written Harry's story.

Wendy Baker, (October 2020)
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks must, in the first place, go to my late father-in-law Harry Baker for keeping all his family's documentation for so many years, without which this story may never have had enough factual basis to be written.

To *The Times* of Victor Harbor, South Australia, for permission to reproduce photographs (including the photo and article about the house sale) previously published in their newspaper.

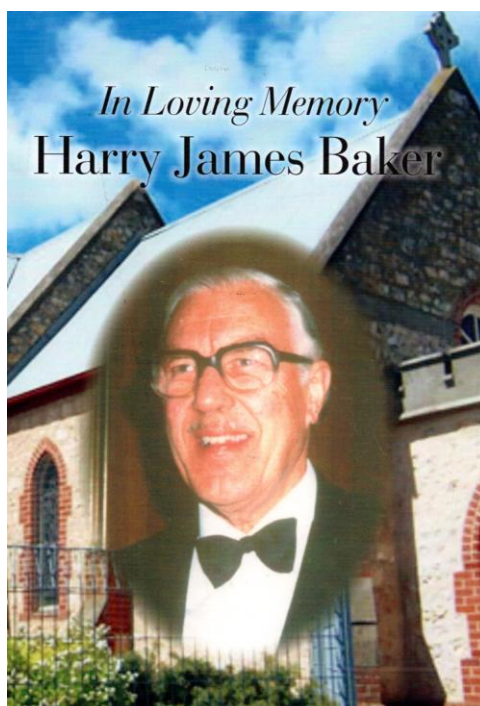
To the *Government Record Office UK* for birth, marriage and death certificate details (Crown Copyright)

Military researcher *Michael Briggs* for details of Harry Samuel Baker's WW1 service.

To everyone in the immediate and extended Baker family for their input, including Harry's cousins' families and those of his wife Mabel Doris Baker (nee Spotswood), in England.

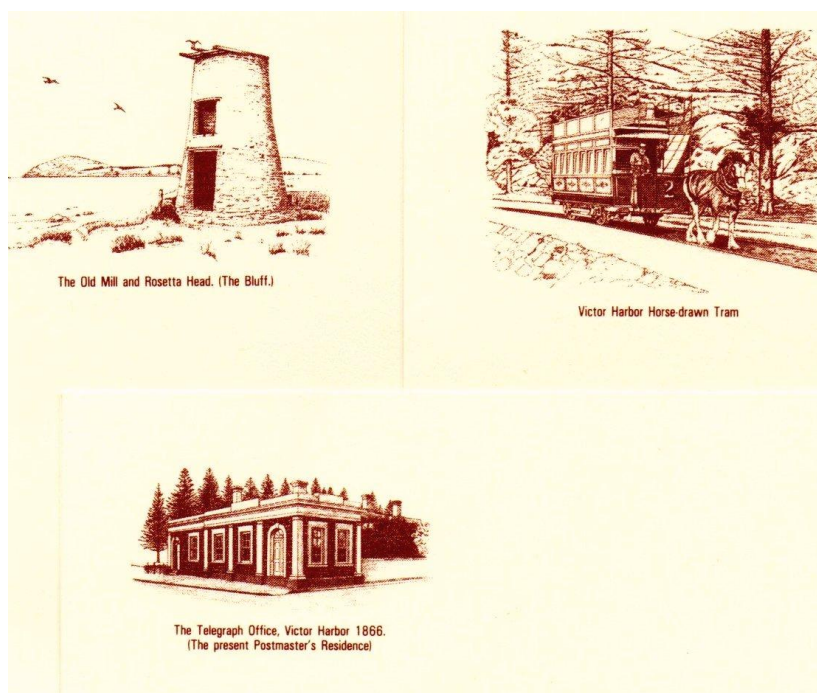
To my husband John for his interest and patience and for rescuing me from my computer problems.

And to our daughter Valerie for her advice and proof-reading skills.



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IN THREE CENTURIES

THE STORY OF THE BAKER FAMILY

Chapter 1 – Early Years

When Harry James Baker passed away at the age of 89 years in March 2006, he left a big vacuum. For so long he had been the patriarch of his family, ever since migrating here to South Australia from post-war London in 1948 with his wife and two young sons.

This generation of Baker children were fortunate to grow up knowing their father, while he knew almost nothing of his own father's life, nor that of his siblings nor the Baker extended family. He had accepted what had come to pass after the death of his father in the First World War, and grew up in the love and care of his step-dad and half-brother, and his own mother. But he would always retain the Baker name.

After Harry's death in 2006, some of the family became curious about those earlier Bakers. It was realized that there was much even about Harry's life that the family, particularly grandchildren and great-grandchildren, would not perhaps know.

And so this story began ...

Harry James Baker's paternal great-grandfather was one James Baker, born in 1818 at Goodnestone, Kent in the south-east of England. James' parents were Samuel Baker, born 1791 in Kent, and Catherine (nee Wood), born about 1790 in Kent. In 1845 young James married Eliza (nee Spratt) in the Faversham District. She too was born in 1818, at Hernhill, Kent.

James and Eliza Baker's children were Matilda Baker, born in 1847 at Dunkirk, and **George S. (Samuel) Baker** born three years later in 1850, also at Dunkirk, Kent.

In 1874 in Faversham, George married **Catherine Akhurst** (possibly Katherine, also referred to as Kate) born in 1855 at Teynham. He was 24, she was only 19.

George and Catherine Baker lost no time in starting their family of nine children. Walter John was born in 1875 at Badlesmere, Kent in the year following their marriage; George James followed in 1877, also at Badlesmere; John William in 1880 at Harbledown, Ada Fanny (apparently their only daughter) in 1882 at Boughton-under-Blean. Ernest Thomas was born in 1884 at Dunkirk, William in 1887 at Dunkirk, and Harry Samuel in 1889 at Boughton-under-Blean. Then came Arthur Percy in 1892 at Shieldwick (or Sheldwich) and Frederick Charles in 1894, also at Shieldwick.

During the 19th century both the Baker and the Akhurst families lived in the vicinity of the old A2 (the old London-Dover Road). They were agricultural labourers and the various birth-places of their children as given on the UK census at various times would suggest that the families may have moved around a little within Kent, possibly following work. The births of children in these two families born after 1837, when civil registrations first began, were registered in the district of Faversham. These locations have been pin-pointed on old hiking and motoring maps published some time in the 1930's and kept in the family, as well as on more modern road-maps.

George S. Baker listed himself as an agricultural labourer in the 1891 census when he was 41 years old. In the 1901 census he described himself as a Chaff Cutter.

He was still alive, aged 65, at the time of his son Harry Samuel's marriage in April 1915, but his death at Strood, Kent (not far from the mouth of the Medway River) was recorded in the same year.

Not a great deal is known about George and Catherine's nine children; much of what I know has been kindly researched by extended family members in the UK, and what I have been able to glean from on-line records.

Walter Francis Baker, born 1875, appears to have married Florence, (maiden name unknown) as she appears with him on the 1911 UK Census with their three young children.

George James Baker, born 1877, married Ada Larrett in 1909 and had three children.

The one sibling of whom I have no knowledge other than his birth year was *John William Baker*, born 1880 in Harbledown, Kent.

Ada Fanny Baker, born in 1882 is thought to have been Harry Samuel's sister, who married Samuel E. White in 1923. Harry James occasionally spoke of an "Aunt Ada".

Ernest Thomas Baker, born 1884, was still single on the 1901 UK Census, but from records he later appears to have emigrated to the USA in 1907 via Canada, became naturalised in 1909, married, and died 3rd June 1968, buried in Holy Cross Cemetery, Spokane County, Washington.

William Baker, born in 1887, married Sarah Elizabeth Naylor in 1910 and had at least one child.

Arthur Percy Baker was born in 1892 but died in the September quarter of 1905, at just thirteen years old. I have not been able to discover the cause of the boy's death. In March of that year he had received a Holy Bible for "good attendance" at the Primitive Methodist Church, Mills Terrace, Chatham, Kent. The Rev. Wardle was the minister.

Frederick Charles Baker, born on 9th November 1893, was the only uncle, as far as is known, ever to be mentioned by Harry Samuel's son, Harry James Baker. He could have been eligible for service in the First World War. It is also possible that Frederick Charles Baker may have been the mysterious "Uncle Fred" in the family who was rumoured to have gone to Queensland, Australia many years ago. Whether it might have been for work, holiday or to emigrate is

unknown. There was also some vague talk of him dying from heatstroke in the bush, but that has been unable to be substantiated. Research is currently in hand to trace him or any descendants. Because there was also an “Uncle Fred” on the distaff side of the family, the whole matter of a Fred being in the Aussie bush is an unanswered question.

The focus of our story must rest on George and Catherine’s son *Harry Samuel Baker*, their seventh child and sixth son, born on 14th March, 1889 at Boughton on Blean, Kent, England.

But there is also a parallel story.

When **Harry Samuel Baker** was a little boy of three or four years, away in London a baby girl, **Florence Isabel (Doll)**, was born on 4th October 1893 to Polly and John Sykes. Polly (Alice Marion Telling) (or possibly Tilling) and John were married in 1884. Florence, their fourth child and second daughter, was born at home at 395 Kingsland Road, West Hackney, London. Thus the Sykes family enters our story. I shall call her Doll from now on, because that was how she was known to all.



Florence Isabel (Doll) Sykes, holding puppy.

Doll was a beautiful child who grew into a beautiful young woman. She, like her older sister Daisy Alice, her brother James and younger sister Annie Julia (Nan), inherited the combined good looks of Polly and John.

Doll’s father, the handsome John Sykes - born 1851-52 - was a shoe-maker by trade who had spent at

least some time in the shoe-making town of Northampton. Her mother Alice Marion (Polly) – born in Yorkshire 1864-65 - was a well-built woman, rather buxom going by photos and family recall.

How and where did Harry Samuel meet his future wife, Doll? We can only speculate. They lived in approximately the same area, and her father was a shoe-maker. We could romanticize and suggest that Harry went to the Sykes’ to purchase shoes ... but that would be pure conjecture.

Maybe it was the need for employment or just a desire to exchange the country life for the city, but in the 1911 UK Census a Henry Samuel Baker, Barman, 23 years (born in Faversham), marital status single, was residing at “The Old Axe” hotel, 69 Hackney Road, London. Among the other staff was one Alice Marion Sykes, Nurse, 47 years (born in Yorkshire) marital status, married – and mother of Doll Sykes. These details appear to match what we already know about the family. Tradition in the family gives “Harry” as a baptismal name, but perhaps the person who filled out the census form, possibly the public house owner, thought it should have been the more formal “Henry”.



Florence Isabel (Doll) Sykes

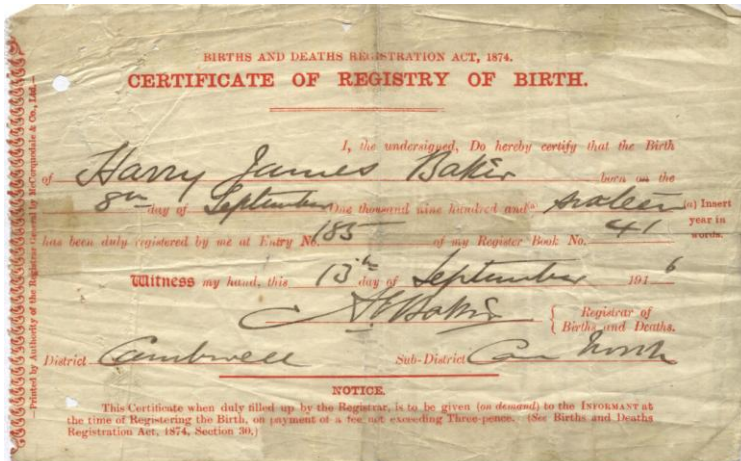


Harry Samuel Baker



St John-at-Hackney

What we are certain of is that on 3rd April 1915 the young barman married lovely 21-year-old Doll Sykes in the parish church of St John-at-Hackney, Lower Clapton Road, London. Built in 1792 in an open field close to the Hackney medieval church, it was within easy walking distance of 92 Amhurst Road, Hackney, London, the church given on Harry and Doll’s marriage certificate. St John’s is a large church complete with a clock tower and weather vane.



Doll’s mother Alice (Polly) Sykes was one of the two witnesses who signed the marriage register. (The other was Charles Henry Peck, a family friend, of whom more will be mentioned later.) Doll and Harry Samuel’s child was *Harry James Baker*, the central character in this family story. Harry Samuel died in the First World War and the widowed Doll later married William

John Soole. The child of this second marriage was Phillip John Soole (known by some as John, and by others in the family as Jack), six years junior to Harry James, but more of him later in our story.

Polly and John Sykes' eldest daughter, Doll's sister **Daisy Alice Sykes** (1887-1983), married William Carr (1884 - 1965). Their union produced four daughters:- *Daisy Marion* (28th December 1908 – 1986); *Mabel* (20th May 1910 - November 2005); *Phyllis* (5th November 1917 – 1999); and *Peggy Marjorie* (3rd May 1924 – 2004). These four girl cousins were to figure so much at various stages of Harry James Baker's life that they should be introduced here in more detail.

Daisy Marion Carr married William (Bill) Pope on 23rd July 1939 and had John, who married Valerie Cooper about Christmas 1972.

Mabel Carr married Jack Oliver (1909 –1983) in 1935 and had two children Anthony William Oliver and Janet Ann Oliver. Anthony was known to Harry James Baker as “TonyBill” as though it was one word. TonyBill's father Jack was in the Territorials when war broke out. Evidently he was seconded to the Royal Artillery Regiment and finished his service in Haifa, but later died of a sudden heart attack.



Sisters, Mabel Oliver (nee Carr) & Peg Hart (nee Carr)

Peggy Marjorie Carr, fondly known as “Aunty Peg” in later years, married Frank Hart and had one child, Timothy (Tim) - born in the early 1960's - who remains a bachelor.

Phyllis Carr married Edward Percy (Ted) Kirkham. They divorced and she later married Pat Maurice Patrick (1920 – 1990). Their children were Barbara and Kathleen. Barbara and her husband Rick Durack live in England and contact with them has been maintained. Kathleen married Tony Pearson in 1969-1970 but after his death just a few years later, she married Colin Vicker and they lived for much of their married life as expat Brits – first in Spain and later in the Loire Valley, France. Kathleen died on 25th March 2002 from complications with the illness Lupus erythema. In 2005 Colin married a Norwegian lady, Inger; the couple now lives in Norway, closer to Inger's family.

Going back now a generation to Polly and John Sykes, their youngest daughter was **Annie (Nan) Julia Sykes** (born 1896), who married Len Shafer – their children were Robert (Bobby “Bingo”, born 1926) and Peter (born 1932). Bobby Bingo died in 1932 aged only five, from peritonitis following a ruptured appendix. Tragically, his death was within just a few days of Peter's birth. Peter had a lucky escape when still a child, after being buried in rubble during a German bombing raid on 29th April 1941, during the Blitz in World War II..

Polly and John's only son was **James (Jim)**, who married twice – first time to “Glad” and the second time to “May” – we do not know her maiden name. Nor is it known whether the first

marriage ended in death or divorce. James had two daughters – Pat Sykes, who married Ron Cook on 24th January 1944, and Joyce Sykes, who never married. Both women eventually emigrated to New Zealand. Pat died in the late 1990's and Joyce also has since passed away.

John Sykes died at about age 65, apparently in the Whittington Hospital in London, some time before 1916, although this is unsubstantiated. The widowed Polly died, when only about 63 years old, in 1927 at Lamberhurst in Sussex, so we have been told.

The Great War – World War I – the war to end all wars – call it what you will, was a tragedy that began in 1914, the year before Harry Samuel Baker's marriage to Doll. In 2015, the centenary of that war, more information became available on the internet and with help from English researcher Michael Briggs (michael.briggs@newcastle.ac.uk) I was able to fill in a lot of gaps.

Michael emailed 22nd January 2015 in response to my query and wrote : *“As you probably know the service records of about 90% of the soldiers that served in WWI were destroyed in the 1940's during the blitz, including those of Harry. So the letters that you have got are probably the only official records that still exist, apart from the Medal Roll that I sent earlier.*



“However, the British Army were nothing if not predictable, particularly when it came to issuing Regimental numbers, and the Notts & Derby were particularly logical about it. So you can learn a lot about a soldier from his number and men with similar numbers whose records still exist.

“So based on those criteria Harry was in a group of some 200 men from London who were posted to the 2/6th Notts & Derby and given numbers in the range 242002 to 242199. So Harry sits at the beginning with 242008.



“242010 Sidney Greenfield was from Camberwell and was mobilised on the 19th September 1916 and sent to the depot at Chesterfield. Harry's movements would have been almost identical to Sidney's.”

So Harry joined up, and within about three weeks was mobilised on the 19th September 1916, reporting to the Central London Recruiting Depot. He was placed as a Private, Regimental number 242008, in the Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Regiment (Notts & Derby) on that day.

His son Harry James was to say in later years “My mother told me she was four days in labour. I

Doll Soole, baby Harry James Baker, Harry Samuel Baker and Doll's mother-in-law Polly Sykes

finally arrived at ten minutes to nine when the school bell was ringing. Does this account for the fact that I always seem to be running late for appointments, however hard I try to be early?"

An undated studio photo shows Harry Samuel standing proudly in his uniform with his family between his wife Doll and his mother-in-law Polly Sykes who holds baby Harry James.

I asked Mike Briggs if he knew the movements of Harry Samuel Baker's regiment, and when this favourite family photo may have been taken, and his reply followed:

"The 2/6th Battalion (along with the entire 59th 2/North Midland Division) were sent to Ireland to put down the Easter Rising in April 1916. They stayed there all year and sent out flying columns to capture Irish Republicans.

"However, in August 1916 the 2/6th Battalion had to send 200 men to France to help make up losses from the Battle of the Somme. Hence the need for reinforcements themselves – which is where Harry and the '200 Londoners' come in.

"The 2/6th Battalion left Ireland (with Harry) on 12th January 1917, went to Salisbury Plain and then to France on 25th February. I would say that the family photos must have been taken in that small window of time. The soldiers were often given leave before proceeding overseas (Ireland at that time was not considered overseas)."

Based on this, the studio photo would have been taken between 12th January, 1917 and 25th February, 1917.

The baby's christening took place on 28th January, 1917. It is interesting that the Christian names appear on the Baptism Certificate as Harry James Thomas, although Harry never used the third name of Thomas.

His soldier daddy would scarcely have seen much of his blue-eyed baby boy. A studio photo taken on 7th June 1917 reads *"9 months old tomorrow. With love to dear Daddy. From Wifie & Baby."* Baby Harry is resplendent in a frilled and be-ribboned cream short-sleeved frock, with little socks and black shoes with button straps.

Studio photo-postcards were fashionable in those times, before the mass ownership of cameras. One such card showing baby Harry James naked on animal furs, was sent by Doll to her husband at the front. The poignant message reads *"To my Daddy – Sonnie Harry, XXX, 28/6/1917. Dear Daddy, I am nearly 1 year old. Will you come home to my birthday? XXX"*

The War Diary of 26 October 1917 states: *"Enemy raid on advanced night post repulsed. 1 Enemy killed and captured. Our casualties 3 slightly wounded"* so it is possible that Private Baker was one of those wounded, given that the communications and advisory letters were not always able to keep track of the rapid movement of injured soldiers through various field hospitals.

Not long afterwards, little Harry's mother received Army Form B.104-80A dated 20th July 1917 from the Territorial Force Record Office, Lichfield Station, stating simply that Private H. S. Baker *"was admitted to 7th Stationary Hospital Wimereux suffering from Rheumatic Fever (Severe)."* Another form dated 22nd October 1917, advised that he had been wounded on 26th September, but the hospital of admission was unknown. The next form, dated 20 October stated that *"Private H. S. Baker, Notts. & Derbyshire Regt., was admitted to 6 Convalescent Depot, Etaples, on the 5th day of October, 1917, with a shot wound to the jaw."* It must have been an agonizing time waiting for such brief, cold statements.

There was one more Army "Form E" dated 7th May 1918, stating simply: *"In further reply to your enquiry of the 18th April 1918 I am directed to inform you that the above-named soldier (Private H.S. Baker of Regiment 2/6 Sherwood Foresters ("A" Company) has been officially reported as "Missing" since the 21st March 1918."*

This has been verified by the sighting of the Red Cross card sent by the Germans on 27th March, notifying his capture at Bullecourt on 21st March 1918, and giving his Regimental number and name.

The final chapter in this war-time tragedy, one of so many thousands, was the true copy of the *Certificate of Death of Harry Samuel Baker, British Prisoner of War No. 242008, Occupation – Spinner, on the 27th August 1918 in the Nordstein Mine at Branch Camp 1028.* It was dated 28th August, 1918, at Merkstein in the District of Aachen. (The occupation given as "spinner" remains a mystery. Did it mean rope spinner?) This coal-mining area was in the industrial heartland of West Rhineland, Germany. The names of his wife and parents were unaccountably listed on the death certificate as unknown. The Red Cross card shows a cross next to the death date of 27th August 1918, and *"Baker, Harry Samuel, sold(ier) 2/6 Sherwood Rg. A Komp."* His POW death record from Germany shows cause of death as heart failure and this would have been due in no small part to his having had severe rheumatic fever less than ten months earlier, followed by the shot wound.



Harry Samuel Baker's grave, Cologne War Cemetery

Many years later, in the 1980's, Doll's sister Annie (Nan) Julia Shafer (nee Sykes), then an old lady, sent Harry Baker (junior) a postcard of his father's grave in the Cologne Southern War Cemetery in Germany (reference VIII.E.5). She wrote *"did you ever get the postcard ... a picture of your Dad's grave in Cologne; I sent it 'cos I loved your dad and kept it all those years."* More recently David Evans, Australian co-ordinator of the Akehurst One-Name Study Group, very kindly visited Cologne on one of his research trips and photographed Harry Samuel's grave for me.

Harry Samuel Baker died at just 29 years old, leaving his beloved "Wifie" and baby Harry James Baker only three weeks short of his little son's second birthday. In an irony of timing, the Great War was over within three months of Harry Samuel's death. With autumn heralding winter it must have been a cold, dark time for Doll.

In the 1881 Census, young **Samuel Soole** was counted as an 18 year old “*Grocers Assistant*” living with his mother Hannah, his brother William aged 33 and sister Annie aged 20, at 84 Old Woolwich Road, Kent, Greenwich.

When the 1891 census was taken, it was noted that Samuel had become the head of the family, now married to **Mary Resia Soole (nee Vince)**, and they were both 30 years old “*at previous birthday*”. Because of this criterion, ages given on census returns were not necessarily one hundred per cent accurate. At the 1901 census, Samuel’s age was given as 39 and he was by then a “*Grocer - Employer*”; his son Alfred was five years old and William Soole (Bill) was seven. Alfred had the misfortune to be deaf and dumb. They lived at 205 Coldharbour Lane, Loughborough Junction.



Joseph (Joe) Kirby & Hannah (nee Soole)

Not mentioned at census were Samuel and Mary’s two other children Hannah (Nance) and Mary (Polly) who later married Robert Major and had two children, Joan and Mary (Wink).

Hannah (Nance) Soole later married Joseph Kirby (“Uncle Joe” to Harry James Baker’s children). One of Nance and Joe’s daughters’ names was Wendy, not surprising, given that Joe Kirby, who worked in theatre, was the “*Sole Proprietor of the world famous Kirby’s Flying Ballets. Producer of Peter Pan flying effects; somersaulting, diving and auditorium flying*”. His company letterhead reads “*Productions for which I arranged the Flying Effects including [et al]*

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Peter Pan annually since 1904". Many girls - including myself - were fondly named "Wendy" after J.M. Barrie's play *Peter Pan and Wendy* was first published in 1904, in the same way that many children now are named for television and movie stars. Nance and Joe's other daughter was Nina.

Nance Kirby's husband Joe took his productions and expertise overseas to the U.S.A. where his special flying techniques were used by Walt Disney in the making of "Mary Poppins" and other movies and theatricals which incorporated flying acts.

Samuel and Mary's son **William (Bill) John Soole** grew up and joined the 21st Battalion London Regiment of the Territorial Forces, rank Rifleman, and number 2869. Territorial Force Record Office documents show that he was first wounded in action on the 10th April, 1915. An inscription on the back of a portrait of him in uniform reads "*Enlisted. Wounded April 10th. Taken in hospital 13th. Rouen.*" William was admitted to No. 6 General Hospital, Rouen, France with a gunshot wound to his shoulder.

(To keep the parallel time-line in perspective, this would have been ten days after Harry Samuel Baker married Doll Sykes.) .

A gunshot wound and "contused left leg" put him in the same hospital on 25th May, 1916, a year or so later. Presumably some time after this, from a temporary address in Ward 7, Unit 6, 5 Southern General Hospital, Portsmouth, he sent a postcard to his parents Samuel and Mary which read "*Dear Mum and Dad, arrived England 9 o'clock English time last night; am at Portsmouth, couldn't get to London. Am going strong. Won't be here long. Will write you again later. The King [George V] visited us on this boat. Best love to all, Bill*".

There is a gap in our knowledge of William Soole's life between 1916 and 1921, but at some point he met the widowed Doll Baker. She had moved house and now lived at 6 Selborne Road, Camberwell. Her own father had died, her father-in-law George Baker had died in the same year as her marriage and she had her baby son Harry James to care for. She must have felt somewhat bereft of close male support, as would have so many other war-widows at the time, although her mother Polly Sykes and her sisters Daisy and Nan, and perhaps also her brother James, would have given comfort. Polly features in several of the photos of Harry's baby photos.

On the 28th February 1921 **Doll Baker (nee Sykes) married William (Bill) Soole** at the Camberwell Registry Office. At that time he was a Motor Engineer – the term for a bus driver. He drove the famous London red double-decker buses for the London Passenger Transport Board. He recalled that in those days the driver was unprotected from the weather, as in the days of the horse-drawn omnibuses. One of his later (1938) licences indicated that he was "*licenced to drive a Public Service Vehicle*". Prior to his being a driver Bill had worked as a motor mechanic for Thomas Tilling & Co. In a recollection in 2007 his son John Soole said 'Dad always reckoned he felt more comfortable driving the London buses than being a mechanic.' He also played cricket for a local team at Camberwell.

The reason why is no longer important, but the newly married Doll Soole lost all further contact with her first husband's family. This has left many unanswered questions about the Baker side of the family tree.

On 31st July 1922, **Phillip John Soole** was born. As he came to be known to some as John but more often by others in the family as Jack, he will be referred to as Jack for the rest of this story. He was Bill Soole's first and only natural son, and Doll's second son.

At his mother's re-marriage, little four and a half-year-old Harry James Baker gained a step-father. With baby Jack's arrival eighteen months later, Harry also now had a baby half-brother. The Baker name was retained for Harry until he was considered old enough to make a choice, but when his step-father asked him in his teens if he would change his family name to Soole, he declined, saying that he was by birth a Baker, not a Soole. However, Harry always enjoyed a very close family relationship with the Sooles and until his death in 2018 at the age of 96, Jack Soole retained particularly fond memories of Harry.

Young Harry started school in about 1921 at the Denmark Hill School, Infants' Section, a London County Council school in Camberwell, S.E. London. After about three and a half years at Denmark Hill he attended Downham Central School. A class photograph at Downham shows him in a typical classroom of that era (complete with a wall map of the world showing the huge red grasp of the British Empire) in a class of 40 boys all in shorts, long socks, shirts, blazers and ties.

One of Harry's woodcuts



Throughout his time at Downham Central, Harry was involved in the production of the school magazine and was noted for the quality of his fine wood-cut illustrations reproduced in the magazine. Even as a youth he was a patient perfectionist in his artistic endeavours, as in all things. Harry was also a school prefect.

In 1928-29 and 1929-30 he received elaborately printed certificates for proficiency in Scripture Knowledge. Jack Soole also received at least one of these certificates but from a different school – The Rangefield London County Council School. This may have been due to the six year age difference between the two boys.

Harry's family moved to 501 Bromley Road, Kent when young Harry was nine years old. In a later recollection of his boyhood home Harry said 'We moved there in about 1925. The back gardens all had picket fences between them; because 501 was on the end of the row, the garden wall was six feet high. Beyond that was a row of shops.'

The property backed onto Council yards at the rear, and behind them was the United Dairies' depot.



There were many holidays in the boys' youth. Their mother Doll sent a postcard photo to her father-in-law Samuel Soole at 110 Tulse Hill, London. This photo of the two boys having donkey rides on the beach was postmarked "*Margate 5 Aug 1924 3.30 pm*" and read "*Dear Dad, am sending you a snap of the donkeys, I mean the two boys. Having a splendid time. The weather has been kind. Lots of love. Best wishes to all from Doll and the boys.*" Jack was two and Harry eight at the time. When Jack was

92 years old and we showed him the photo of him and Harry on the donkey, he laughed and said 'Have a good look at your father. He's the only kid on the beach wearing a tie!'

On 12th December 1925, when Harry's Aunt Nan Sykes married Len Shafer, Harry was photographed with his cousins – Phyllis, Peggy, Mabel and Daisy Carr, and Pat and Joyce Sykes - and grandmother "Granny Sykes" (Polly). Polly and the children were dressed in their best and nine-year-old Harry looked splendid in his dark suit with a white flower in his buttonhole. This photo is very well known in the family and there are several copies of it. Four year old Jack Soole was to have been in the group portrait. 'But,' Harry explained, 'John's fingers had been accidentally shut in the taxi door and he was unable to be included.' (It should be said here that Harry usually called his half-brother "John" rather than "Jack".)



Harry James Baker aged 9 with his Sykes & Carr cousins & Granny Polly Sykes

The boys and their cousins - Pat and Joyce Sykes, the Carr girls, and the daughters of Jack Soole's Uncle Alf (the deaf and dumb French polisher and his wife Maude) - spent many jolly times at Margate. A 1926 photo shows ten year old Harry holding his thin, frail-looking little brother Jack who was recovering from scarlet fever – once again, Margate was the place.



In 1931, at 15 years old, Harry "went into" long pants, with a photo of him in the garden of the family home at 501 Bromley Rd, Bromley, Kent, 'to prove it', he once said.

Harry finished his schooling at the age of 15 ½ years. He was always interested in drawing, and among his effects is a Concession Certificate from the British and Dominions School of Drawing, Greycoat Galleries, Greycoat Place, London, (dated 27th October 1930) stating that Mr. H. Baker "*has been awarded a Concession Which entitles the Bearer to a full course of instruction in Black and White and Poster Drawing*

at the Special Concession Rate of Eight Pounds Fifteen Shillings cash For twelve months." Together with this faded blue certificate No. 27 are his earliest sketchbooks, showing an attention to detail that was always his "trademark" in everything he did.

In the next few years there were more holidays in the southern coastal spots of Swanage, Dorset; the rugged "Old Harry Rocks", Studland, Corfe Castle, and Westgate, among others. Harry fondly recalled visits to Tiddlywinks Cave, reputed to be an old smugglers' cave. There were cliff-top walks, picnics on the beaches, and adventures in boats.

Harry and Jack usually stayed in hotels on these holidays; Jack Soole tells the story of how he and Harry struck up a friendship with two beautiful young ladies who were also at the hotel. They seemed much more interested in Harry than Jack. Harry was indeed a handsome young man of fine physique.



1936, Harry Baker & Margate Beauty Queen

'It's not fair!' Jack said he once complained to his half-brother Harry. 'You've gone into long pants and I still have to wear short pants!' He was certain that it was because of his bare knees that the girls passed him over in favour of his older brother! Those were the days when it was considered improper for boys to wear long pants until they reached a certain age. They must have half-frozen in the bitter-cold English winters.

Sixteen year old Harry started work on 9th May 1932 at the large engineering works of J. Stone & Company Limited at Deptford, South-East London, where an uncle was a cost clerk. Harry started as an improver but within three months was granted an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering and tool-making, later becoming a tool designer.

Harry loved music, particularly the classics; he also owned a banjo-ukulele which is still in the family. Although serving his apprenticeship and studying at night, he still managed to find time to relax. Margate was one of his favourite places. There are several photos of Sheila Goodwin, Beauty Queen of Margate in 1936, with whom Harry had struck up a holiday friendship.

At the end of November in 1936, young Harry, along with thousands of other Londoners, watched from a nearby hill the spectacular burning of the beautiful Crystal Palace at Sydenham. It was, he said, "awful" as in "full of awe", the true sense of the word, and was something he always remembered.

The Great Exhibition had been held way back in 1851 in this wondrous Crystal Palace, a magnificent structure of glass and iron, similar to a giant glass-house or conservatory. It was designed by Paxton and erected in Hyde Park, London. Exhibits from all over the British Empire were on show and with the enormous interest in new technological advances of the time, many thousands visited the Exhibition. The Palace became a landmark of renown. It was later re-erected at Sydenham.

With the rise of Fascism, Germany's involvement in the Spanish civil war (1936-1939) and every possibility of another major world conflict on the horizon, rumour had it that some people speculated the fire was not necessarily such a bad thing, as the Palace's acres of glass would no longer be a possible beacon to enemy bombers.

Harry remembered the Coronation of King George VI (husband of Queen Elizabeth the late Queen Mother) in May, 1937. He had to get up at three in the morning to get a good vantage point from which to see the pageantry, because, he said, 'all London was going to be closed to traffic at 4 a.m.' Forever a loyal monarchist, Harry felt it well worth waiting for twelve hours to be able to take several photos from his spot near Pall Mall.

In later years, Christmas Day celebrations were always paused while the whole Baker family watched the Queen's Christmas Message broadcast on television. This royal broadcast was a tradition begun, originally on radio, by King George V (grandfather of Queen Elizabeth II) in 1932 and carried on by King George VI and then by Queen Elizabeth II. Harry's own tradition was, without fail, to listen and then later after the advent of T.V., to watch the Queen's Christmas Message. From the oldest to the youngest in Harry's presence during the broadcast, we would stop what we were doing and watch – not so much out of respect for the monarchy but respect for Harry. He was just that sort of gentleman.



The mid to late nineteen-thirties for Harry meant years of hard, physical, often hot and dirty work during the day at Stones and labouring on into the evenings with his Technical Institute studies, only to return home later at night to do his homework. When he felt himself nodding off he would take one of his grandfather Samuel Soole's miniature wire-haired fox terriers for a walk. Most nights he was not in bed until one or two in the morning.

It was no wonder that he found relief in those seaside holidays spent boating, swimming, hiking, picnicking and promenading with cousins and friends – and yes, his mother and aunts often went too. Much time was also spent at the Bellingham Baths in Catford, near Bromley Kent. Most of the photos of these excursions are dated around 1936-37.

One of Harry's valued photos was of a wedding party with all the guests, including Harry as a young man, in the photo. This was the marriage of Charles (Charlie) Peck's daughter Dorrie. Charlie Peck had been a great family friend of John and Polly Sykes, Harry James Baker's maternal grandparents. It was a close friendship that lasted at least two generations; Charlie was one of the two witnesses (the other being Doll's mother Polly) who had signed the marriage register at Doll Sykes wedding to Harry Samuel Baker. Charlie Peck was a commercial traveller specialising in ladies' frocks, which he sold to Polly Sykes for re-sale.

While was serving his apprenticeship Harry studied at the London County Council South East London Technical Institution, Lewisham, gaining "*highly satisfactory*" results between 1932 and 1938 in Maths, Engineering Science, Engineering Drawing, Mechanics Processes, Heat

Engines, Physics, Metallurgy, I.C. Engines, Materials Strength and Machine Theory. He gained his Higher National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering. He graduated as a Chartered Mechanical Engineer and a Chartered Production Engineer.

Harry completed his apprenticeship on his 21st birthday, 8th September, in 1937. The apprenticeship, comprising two years un-indentured and three years indentured service, gave him turning, milling and shaping experience in the heavy machine shop, heavy fitting, tool-room fitting, five months in the general office, and twelve months on the board, of the tool room planning department.

He remained with Stones as a jig and tool draughtsman in their planning department and not quite three years later, on 31st May 1940, he became a Graduate of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

Harry spoke with his family's natural accent of dropped aitches, rhyming slang and other dialectal characteristics. To gain more credibility in his engineering career, to be able to gain a place on the "other side" of that gulf between blue collar and white collar employee, Harry went to elocution classes to successfully overcome the cockney dialect and he spoke well-modulated English with clear articulation for the rest of his life. Contrary to almost everyone else in his workplace, Harry did not smoke. However, he always carried an elegant silver cigarette case so that he was able to offer others a cigarette, as was business and social "etiquette" at the time.

An old address book of Harry's from around 1938 and several years following shows that most of his extended family – his aunts, uncles and cousins – lived in the greater London area and nearby. At this time Jack and Mabel Oliver (nee Carr) were at Catford S.E.6, Joyce Sykes and her married sister Pat Cook (nee Sykes) were in Colindale N.W.9. Samuel Soole his step-grandfather was at Brockley S.E.4. His step-uncle Alfred Soole was at Brixton S.W.2. It is easy to locate Greater London addresses because of this postal system of denoting the direction from the city centre – South East, North West, etc. This system is still used.

Harry's uncle Jim Sykes was at Middlesex. Nance and Joe Kirby were in Sussex, and his cousin Phyl Kirkham (nee Carr) was in Datchet, Buckinghamshire.

One of the family friends was Harry Hibbs, an ex-Naval diver, whose daughters Gwen and Brenda appear in many of Harry Baker's photos. He and Brenda remained good friends all their lives. In 2003 she wrote to Harry. *"...I often think of our younger days when you and John (Phillip John Soole) and Cousin Peggy (Carr) used to come and stay with us. The many times a day that we used to run down Seymour Road with our swimming things on ready to dash into the sea and the time you picked me up in your arms because a big wave was coming towards us."* And in another glimpse of pre-war carefree youth, Brenda wrote... *"How is John? I always remember the day that John, Peggy and myself got lost in a hayfield, the hay was taller than we were, and we got home late and got into trouble."*

As a young man Harry enjoyed playing in a darts club team and among his effects was his darts set, complete with genuine feather flights, rather fragile after so many years. He also spent some time skating at an ice-rink – this could well have been at the magnificent Wembley Stadium

built in 1923 - where, he said, plush theatre-style upholstered seats enabled visitors to watch in comfort as skaters glided around the rink.

After his graduation in 1940 Harry volunteered for the Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (REME) but was rejected because of his two years' engagement on armament and aircraft production. In fact, he apparently made three attempts to enlist, all with the same official decision to reject his desire to join up on the grounds of his employment in essential services. He was a marvellous planner and designer and his forte was the design of incendiary bomb factories in cellars and basements beneath bombed-out buildings which looked deserted from the air. Crucial engineering was able to continue without attracting the attention of the Luftwaffe (German Air Force).

Harry also designed work-stations with consideration for both productivity and the workers, most of whom were females unused to a factory environment. He told how at one time production was slowing because of absenteeism due to injuries to the girls' hands; on investigation he found that drilling machine operators were facing a blank wall. Harry realised that they needed to be able to chat to each other. He had mirrors placed on the walls so that the girls could see each other as they worked, without turning around. The strategy was successful.

Harry's step-dad William (Bill) John Soole continued to drive the London buses during the war and qualified for an award in the 1942 "Safe Driving" competition run by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. He was also a test driver for new and modified buses, a task he reportedly thoroughly enjoyed, ensuring that the vehicles got a good workout! He was entitled to a *"Bar to Silver Medal [but] owing to the Prohibition of Manufacture and Supply Order 1942, it is not possible to supply this during the present emergency."* He was promised his bar, to replace the small paper certificate, at some time in the future. Whether he ever received it, we do not know!



At the end of 1942 Harry's half-brother Jack Soole married Glaswegian lass Kathleen (Kay) Gardiner (born 6th January 1923) on the 28th December. The wedding party comprised Phyl Carr, Harry Baker, two of Kay's female friends, Jack Soole and his father William (Bill), Kay's younger

brother, an unidentified lady (possibly Peggy Carr) and Jack and Harry's mother Doll Soole. All but three in the group were in service uniform, a sign of the times. Also, on the far left in the wedding photo was a young dark-haired woman - Mabel.

Chapter 2 – A New Family

Brown-eyed **Mabel Doris Spotswood** came from a large extended family. She was born in London in the District of Poplar on 24th September, 1910. To put the era of Mabel's birth into context, it was only a month after Florence Nightingale died; Mabel's parents grew up during Victorian and Edwardian times, and in fact Edward VII died only four months before Mabel was born.

On her mother's side, her grandparents were Edwin Crighton (born 1845) and Frances Crighton (nee Knopp) (born 1855 in Ilford).

Edwin's parents, Andrew Crighton (Crichton?) born in Scotland in 1817, and Ann Holland born 1818, were married in 1836 in Manchester Cathedral. In 1871 Ann and her 31-year-old son Edwin were next door neighbours of the Knopps. So far (2020) Andrew's birth records have not been able to be found; I can only go by the date on his marriage certificate.

Frances' father was George R. Knopp, a sea captain (1829 – died before 1891). Her mother MaryAnn (nee Pipe) (born 1831) had three children – Frances, Alfred and Emilie (Emily?). Frances, born in 1855, was the youngest.

Edwin Crighton fell in love with the girl next door, marrying Frances Knopp in 1876, though ten years her senior.

Edwin and Frances Crighton had a large family, including Mabel's mother Helen (Nellie) Mary. Mabel was provided on her mother's side with many aunts, uncles and cousins, some of whom she remained close to all her life. Mabel's maternal great-grandfather, the Captain George Knopp, is thought to have been a river pilot in Austria at some stage. A story was passed on by Terry Doherty, a niece of Betty Creighton. She wrote "*...Grandpa Knopp ... stories tell, brought Cleopatra's needle across from the continent*"

The "Needle" monolith, built in Egypt for the Pharaoh Thotmes III in about 1500 B.C., was taken to Alexandria after Cleopatra's death. The British Government wanted a monument to celebrate their victory over Napoleon Bonaparte, and some fifteen thousand pounds was raised by public subscription to bring it to London from Alexandria. It was presented to the British Government in 1819 by Mohammed Ali, Viceroy of Egypt and finally arrived at the Thames Embankment in 1878. It weighed 183 tonnes and was 20.8 metres tall.

A disastrous storm in the Bay of Biscay almost sank the purpose-built barge *Cleopatra*, carrying her namesake, towed by the S.S. *Olga*. Six volunteers were sent in a boat to rescue the *Cleopatra*'s crew – all six volunteers drowned when their boat was swamped. Later the five crewmen and their skipper were taken aboard the *Olga* and the towrope was cut. Days later the

floating *Cleopatra* was sighted by another boat and towed to the Spanish coast. Another steamship, the *Anglia*, finally towed *Cleopatra* up the Thames in January 1878.

Was Mabel's great-grandfather, "Grandpa Knopp", the skipper of either the *Anglia*, or of the *Cleopatra*, as is thought in family lore? The fact alone that he was a sea-captain, and that some of her male relatives in her mother's (Creighton) and father's (Spotswood) families were engaged in nautical occupations at the old London docks, perhaps helped lay the foundation of Mabel's life-long love of all things nautical.

Edwin and Frances' eight children were:

Andrew Crighton (born 1877) married Rose. There were no children.

Emily Grace Crighton (born 1879) died in 1882 aged only about three years.

Frederick George Creighton (born 1881) was a marine engine fitter, possibly also at London docks. He designed the cranes used to offload ships. He married Jessica (Jessie) Mayne and carried on the tradition of a large family. Some of their six daughters became close to Mabel and so they can be mentioned in more detail. The girls were:-

Dorothea - married Edward Johnson. Their daughter Frances-Ann (Cesann) married Emilio Piazza and had two children, Paola and Cristina.

Norah - married Hector Harper. Their daughter was Marianne (Sally).

Eunice and *Phyllis* were twins. Eunice married Victor Smith.

Phyllis - married Patrick Doherty whose daughter is Teresa (Terry). Terry sometimes writes to some in the family "Down Under" and came to South Australia in the 1990's ago to visit. (N.B. Phyllis and Pat Doherty should not be confused with the "Aunty Phyl and Uncle Pat" Patrick who also visited the Baker family in South Australia. That Phyllis Patrick's maiden name was Carr, on the Sykes' side of the family; after her divorce from her first husband Edward Percy (Ted) Kirkham, she married again, to Pat Patrick, and they had a long and happy marriage.)

Jessie Beatrice (Betty) - married Stanley Wotton and they had two boys, Timothy and Richard. Terry Doherty remained in close contact with her aunt Betty all her life, although Betty lived most of her life in Greenwich, near London – some distance from Terry's home in Kendal, Cumbria in the Lakes country. Betty turned 90 on 15th August 2007. In a recent letter Betty wrote: "*my father added the "e" to our name (Cr[e]ighton) and I am supposed to have Grandma Knopp's chin!*" Betty moved in 2010 to a unit closer to her son Richard and daughter-in-law Carol. She died 8th June 2012 in Tunbridge Wells, aged 95.

Jean - married Morris (Maurice?) Caldwell and they had a daughter Judith.

Dorothea, Nora, Eunice, Phyllis, Betty and Jean were known collectively as “the Creighton girls”. Remarkably, every one of Frederick and Jessie’s daughters suffered from cancer.

Alfred Edwin Crighton (born 1883) was an engine pattern maker at, it is assumed, London dockyards. He had one child, Edwina, but there is no knowledge of Alfred’s spouse or partner.

Helen (Nellie) Mary Crighton (born 1884) married Charles Aubrey Spotswood, a commercial traveller (also listed as being a clerk in a cycle works in 1901) and had two children Mabel Doris (24th September, 1910 – 27th September 1991) and Doreen May (born 1914 at Greenwich).

Emily Grace Crighton (born 1887 and named after the deceased child, as was often the custom) married Walter Reeve and had one child Winifred (Winnie) who married Michael (Mick) Rowlands – this couple became very close to Mabel, and are mentioned later in the story.

Marguerite Ann Crighton (born 1889) married Reginald LeMaitre and they had a son, Rex. After being widowed, Marguerite later married her brother-in-law William LeMaitre, and their daughter was Margaret. William travelled the world, especially the Far East, and he would have been “Uncle Will” to Mabel Spotswood. Rex, who married Elsie Booty (“Boots”), also joined the Merchant Navy. In 1956 Rex and Boots and their children Margaret, David, Jeanne and Martin moved to Nyasaland to live. They were followed by Marguerite and William’s daughter Margaret, her husband “Bird” and their children Jane and Richard. After William Le Maitre died, his wife Marguerite moved to Bulawayo (South Rhodesia), now Zimbabwe, to be closer to her son Rex and his family.

Henry Duncan Crighton (born 1892). No information known.

On Mabel’s father’s side, the Spotswoods have been traced right back to Marguerite (or Margaret) Turnbull (born 1803 in Shadwell, died 1870 in Lewisham) who married Joseph Spotswood (born 1801) on 15th April 1823, St. Dunstan, Stepney. Of their six children, one was a shipwright, one a ship mast-maker, and one a ship’s carpenter and shipwright. The mast-maker Thomas Spotswood (1844-1899) married Sarah (born 1845) and between them they produced nine children. In the 1901 census, some of their occupations were listed as waitress (Ada Amelia born 1875), clerk in an iron-works (Alfred Malcolm born 1878), bookbinder (Grace Edith born 1881), clerk in a cycle-works (**Charles Aubrey** born 1883 – the Spotswood of importance to this story) and estate office boy (Frank, born 1886).

Charles Aubrey Spotswood married Helen Mary (Nellie) Creighton (Crighton), as noted earlier, and their daughters were Mabel and Doreen.

Mabel Spotswood’s childhood was not particularly happy. Unfortunately there was a lot of conflict with Mabel’s mother Helen. In later years she told her son John that she had never liked her name because her mother had told Mabel when she was a child “We didn’t know what to call you when you were born, but you were such an ugly baby we decided to call you Mabel.”

Her father Charles spent long periods living apart from his wife and daughters and he died, possibly from a heart attack, at a mere 51 years. There was apparently a lot of friction and jealousy between Mabel, Doreen and their mother Helen during their childhood and earlier adult years.

There were some lighter moments, of course. A holiday postcard sent from Doreen to her sister from Devon in 1937 read *"Dear Mabs, good journey, beautiful weather, look like getting fat. Just off for a prom. Love to Mother. Love, Doreen."* A "prom" in those days meant a "promenade" or stroll in public for genteel amusement, usually along a paved purpose-built walkway near a beach.



Doreen Pearson (nee Spotswood)

Doreen later married Herbert John Scott (known as John) Pearson and their only child was Ian Scott Pearson, who married Vicki, in the early 1970's.

As far as the family knows there are no surviving photographs from Mabel's childhood. She went to boarding school and then joined the Post Office. Mabel considered this job a service to the public and she enjoyed the work. In those days of pounds shillings and pence sterling currency, Mabel could mentally add whole columns of figures and was always able to balance the post office books at the end of the working day. Pension payments and post office savings accounts were handled as well as postal business.

Mabel always remained proud of her work both in the post office and later in the WAAF's, and was later fond of saying 'The exigencies of the service, dears, exigencies of the service' – meaning that whatever one's personal wants or needs, the exigencies or demands of monarch and country came first. Her sense of propriety, moral values and strong work ethic undoubtedly came from her upbringing by parents who had grown up in the Edwardian era.

Mabel was also an intrepid cyclist and there are many photos taken by her during this period with her box Brownie camera, of scenery in many parts of England, south and north. When the Post Office closed at lunchtime on Saturdays, she was off – out to enjoy the fresh air and exercise on her bike, with overnight luggage distributed between front and rear wheels. Mabel found accommodation in guesthouses, youth hostels etc. along the way. She loved the sea and the peace and quiet of the countryside, in places like Worthing and Ferring. One of her best friends was Ida Buckingham, of whom there are several photographs. Mabel was not in the least timid and frequently cycled and holidayed alone.

While staying at the Youth Hostel in Cornwall once, Mabel sent an interesting letter-card of paintings from Penzance to her mother. *"Dear Mother – Got your letter at Harple, called in for my sleeping bag and shirt, both filthy, which I left at a laundry at Exeter, but they haven't arrived yet and am having to hire a sleeping bag at 4d (about 5 cents) a night. I have already sent Winnie (her cousin) a card and am sending her some cream this weekend. The cream wasn't for Grandma's birthday – I sent her some flowers like yours which I hope arrived O.K. Tell Doreen have bought her an ashtray for her bottom drawer (another term for "glory box" or "hope chest" – a place where young ladies stored items considered of use in marriage) instead*

of the primroses which would be rather hard to get packed up as no-one seems to accumulate boxes etc. The ashtray is in stone, like that compass which Nan and Dolly gave me. I saw the man making them. He finds the stone round by Mullion and works on it in a shanty on the side of the road and makes some most beautiful things. Don't forget the address for my money P.O. Exford Somerset, as am spending a lot on food, but am not getting any fatter except my face. Love Mabel.

The postal service in those days was such that many arrangements, even requests to be met at railway stations etc. could be written one afternoon and received the next morning; two deliveries a day as well as on Saturday mornings were the norm.

Mabel sent a hand-coloured six-view folder of postcards from Looe, Cornwall to her mother Helen in April 1937; Mrs. Spotswood's address at that time was 72 Hyde Vale, London S.E.10. From letters that have been kept it is apparent that the Spotswood family moved several times. At one time she lived at 40 Waterbank Road, Catford S.E.6 and at another, 16 Doggett Road, Catford S.E.6.

In 1940-41 Mabel Spotswood and Harry Baker were neighbours. The Spotswoods then lived at 57 Brangbourne Road, Bromley Kent. The Sooles lived almost opposite Mabel, at number 60, which boasted a small sunken garden. This was during the time of the Blitz (from the German Blitzkrieg or "Lightning War"), a terrible period of World War II during 1940-41 when over 40,000 people were killed in bombing raids on England's south-east.

Harry's parents had constructed a precautionary "Anderson shelter" in their back garden. The procedure was to dig as deep a hole as possible, insert the shelter (a few curved sheets of corrugated iron for the roof and a couple of flat sheets for the ends) and then cover the roof with the soil removed from the hole. A sand-bag blast wall was built at the opening end of the shelter, which was just long enough to accommodate a crude bed. These flimsy structures cannot have been too reassuring, but unless they sustained a direct hit they were better than nothing. (Thousands of families, trusting neither their homes nor back-yard shelters, lived in the underground railway stations during the Blitz.)

The Spotswoods did not have an air-raid shelter. At his mother Doll's suggestion, Harry approached Mabel and invited her, her sister Doreen, and Helen Spotswood (her mother) to share the safety of the Sooles' shelter when the air-raid sirens sounded. It was the beginning of Harry and Mabel's path to marriage and lifelong friendship. Coincidentally, although perhaps not surprisingly given the proximity of the two families, before she knew Harry, Mabel knew young Bill Pope who later married Daisy Carr, one of Harry's cousins.

Mabel Spotswood enlisted in the Royal Air Force (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) - (RAF) (WAAF) - on 9 December 1941 and commenced service a couple of months later in 1942, as a Wireless Operator with the rank of Leading Aircraftswoman (LACW). She cycled to and from her work at Biggin Hill, about a half hour trip, in the blackout, with only the faintest light on her bicycle to guide her.



On 11th September, 1943, the Reverend Youngman officiated at Harry and Mabel's wedding in St John's Church, Bromley Kent. Mabel wore a light-coloured knee-length V-neck dress with long sleeves, and a spray of roses; she wore dark gloves, court shoes and a little hat. Harry wore a carnation and fern buttonhole on his dark suit. Harry once mentioned that "there was a public boating pool known as Peter Pan's Pool near the church, and close by was the "Green Man" pub."

Tony (TonyBill) Oliver, son of Jack Oliver and Mabel (nee Carr) – Harry's cousin – recalled that wedding in a recent letter. *"I cannot remember the service, but I can remember the reception in which I was rather spoiled as the only child around at that time. ... We were very conscious that any time we were likely to have a [air]raid. Indeed, soon after ...my mother Mabel and I went up to North Yorkshire to spend the rest of the war... I can't remember Harry after that, presumably he was working and I was back at school in Catford. I remember John Soole, who was at Deal in 1945 and swam out to sea with me on his back to the consternation of my mother. Bill Soole and Aunt Doll were by then landlords of the Duke of Wellington. My grandmother was in 142 West St, very near them, and my grandfather Bill Carr had just retired. I had very many happy hours at Deal running errands for my grandmother, going on the front and walking to Walmer or Sandwich."*



Harry in the "taxi" - the little boy was the son of the proprietor

The newly-wed Harry and Mabel Baker honeymooned at Higher Beeny Farm, Boscastle, on the beautiful, rugged Cornish coast for a week. This war-time luxury was achieved through 24 hour leave passes posted to them every day after a trunk-line telephone call to Biggin Hill Aerodrome to confirm that they were “still alive and needed the passes”! They caught a train down from London to begin their honeymoon, but the “taxi” that came to take them to their farmhouse accommodation turned out to be a pony and trap. During the drive from the railway station the rubber tyre came off the wheel, so Harry put it back on again. Mabel photographed Harry as he sat, holding the farmer’s young son, in the trap.

On the last day of the honeymoon Harry visited the dairy, where the cows were knee-deep in muck. Two weeks later, Harry had entro-colitis from contaminated milk – and eight weeks off work; it must have been a serious illness for him to have had such a long absence from work at that stage of the war.

One day when Harry was working in Stones in a second storey office, an enemy Messerschmitt plane flew below building height, weaving between buildings and above a laneway, its guns strafing. Imagine how terrifying the bombardment must have been as shells entered the open window, one of them exploding into the filing cabinets in Harry’s office. The smell of explosions and screech of tearing metal must have been horrendous in the enclosed area.

R.A.F. FORM 1394
ROYAL AIR FORCE
BRIEF STATEMENT OF SERVICE AND CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE OF

SURNAME BAKER OFFICIAL No. 2027508

CHRISTIAN NAMES Mabel Doris

Date of enlistment 9.12.41. Terms of enlistment 25.2.42. Ds. of P.E.

(a) Date reported for regular service 25.2.42.

(b) Branch of Air Force in which enlisted W.A.A.F. R.A.F. trade W/Op.

Date of discharge 11.12.43. Rank LACW.

(c) Cause of discharge On compassionate grounds.

(Para. 652 Clause 11 King's Regulations and Air Council Instructions.)

(d) General character (i) during service Y.G. (ii) on discharge Y.G.

(e) Degree of trade proficiency —A Sup. B

Special qualifications None.

(f) Medals, Claps, Decorations, Mentions in Despatches, Special Commendations, etc. None.

DESCRIPTION OF ABOVE-NAMED AIRMAN/AIRWOMAN ON DISCHARGE.

Date of birth 24.9.10. Marks or scars None

Height 5 ft. 1 1/2 in.

Complexion Fresh

Colour of eyes Brown Colour of hair Brown

Airman's or airwoman's signature Mabel D Baker

(g) Brief statement of Trade Qualifications and General Conduct:—

This airwoman has been stationed here for the past six months and during that time has carried out all duties entrusted to her in a most satisfactory manner. Her conduct has always been very good. Recommended for re-enlistment.

Unit Stamp **STATION HEADQUARTERS** 22 NOV 1943

(Signed) Keith Harte 3/11/43
 Commanding R.A.A.F. BIGGIN HILL
 Royal Air Force.

Attention is directed to Notes (a) to (c) on reverse.

Mabel Baker's WAF discharge

As Stones expanded production to meet the war-time demand for munitions, Harry’s job was to build underground incendiary factories, churning out similar shells for use by the British.

After a short time the Bakers were delighted to find that they were expecting their first baby. It was suggested that due to the value of her expertise as a Morse operator, “arrangements could be made” for a termination! At this point Mabel applied for and was granted a discharge, dated 11 December 1943, from the WAAF on compassionate grounds. She was stationed at Biggin Hill Aerodrome for about six months prior to her discharge.

Mabel was somewhat upset because tongues wagged and rumours flew as her pregnancy advanced. Only 5 ft. 1 ½ in. (app.156 cm) tall, Mabel was short-waisted and her pregnancy was obvious from an early stage. And apparently some

people were quick to judge without bothering to check their facts. It was, after all, the middle of the war. Leave from the services could not be guaranteed and was usually brief, so there must have been thousands of babies born nine months after a honeymoon!

Mabel's and Harry's time as expectant parents must have been stressful to say the least, as London was being bombed heavily in 1944. Harry, always conscious of others' welfare and of doing the right thing, had become an Air Raid Warden, I.D. no. AOMF/200/3, on 26th February, 1941. Among his old papers is a "Certificate in First Aid" issued by the British Red Cross in February 1944. As an A.R.P. appointed by the Metropolitan Borough of Lewisham, he saw and dealt with many of the horrors of the bombing.

The Bakers survived the Blitz without personal injury, all through the daylight bombing, the cannon shells, flying bombs (V-1's) and rockets (V-2's).

Harry and Mabel's house was bombed three times during the war; each time the roof and top storey were destroyed. Fortunately, apart from windows being blown out, the bottom storey survived, although everything within must have been in a frightful mess.

The first of the German V-1 flying bombs smashed into the East End of London on 12th June 1944. These eight metre long rockets were equipped with wings five metres tip-to-tip and weighed two tons, including 1800 pounds of explosives. The aftermath of these exploding weapons was horrific. One of Harry's contemporaries said that the noise the V-1's made while "flying" was ten times louder than an un-muffled two stroke motor cycle engine at close range.

The real terror for those below began when the noise stopped, because in that deathly silence people had no way of knowing whether the bomb would simply fall straight to earth and explode, or whether it would glide down and explode elsewhere. Harry said 'That was almost the worst part, not knowing where they were going to come down. The silence after the noise.' He paused a moment, then added – surely an under-statement - 'It was frightening, really.' The flying bombs also created vibration at ground level too, so that household items jiggled and ornaments trembled as the bombs passed above. It must have been terrifying for small children. The V-1's were launched relentlessly, day and night, from various sites in Europe. Labelled "buzz-bombs" because of their distinctive noise, they were also known as "doodle-bugs" due to their erratic progress.

In an effort to prevent these terrible weapons reaching their targets, hundreds of "barrage balloons", tethered to the ground by steel cables, were rigged to catch any flying bombs that escaped being shot down by anti-aircraft guns and fighter planes. The V-1's were a comparatively small, fast (600 k.p.h.) target for the gunners.

By this time Mabel's baby was almost due. Wherever the flying bombs went down they caused incendiary spot-fires which had to be extinguished as soon as possible. One of Mabel's stories was how, with the baby's birth imminent, she scaled a six foot wooden paling fence, with stirrup pump and bucket of water in hand, to extinguish a spot fire. She later poured a hot bath for herself, knowing that it could be her last for a while!

Baby John James Baker arrived, on time on the 18th June 1944 in war-ravaged London in the middle of a V-1 attack. Lewisham Hospital's medicos and nurses were in such a hurry to get themselves and their patients into air-raid shelters that Mabel was "hastily stitched up", according to Harry, and did not perhaps get the attention she should have. She was nearly 34

years old when her first baby was born, and haste and confusion in the middle of the air-raid could have contributed to some of her health problems in later years.

After the birth, the new parents had a problem – a bombed, roofless house and a brand new baby. Where to go? At this time Harry's parents, Doll and Bill Soole, were lessees and tenants of the *Duke of Wellington* pub on the corner of Robert and Water Streets, Deal. The hotels were owned by breweries. Doll was a good cook and one of her specialties was her home-made small mincemeat pies, very popular with the *Duke of Wellington's* clients.

Deal was not far from Dover and therefore also a risk because of the proximity to Calais and cross-Channel shelling. 2,000 homes had been destroyed there in the Blitz. But it was a chance they took, considering the state of their home in London. Mabel and baby John went to live at the pub when he was about two weeks old.

The basement room where they lived had a half-window just about ground level; a heavy eiderdown was hung as a curtain on the inside and this helped to deflect stray shrapnel.

Baby John had understandably suffered some birth trauma, possibly suffering what would now be known as post-traumatic shock disorder, and had not regained his birth weight. It was recommended that Mabel try Sunshine brand powdered milk from Australia, and this worked a miracle. John took to the milk readily and thrived. No doubt he was taken for many strolls in his pram, when time and conditions suited, along the seafront at Deal, perhaps even to the great grey Deal Castle.

Arrangements were made for John James' christening in St Andrew's Anglican Church, Deal. In the second escape in his short life so far, the ceremony was called off for safety's sake because of cross-channel shelling from the 21-inch guns on the opposite side of the Channel.



Duke House

English - and German - shipping convoys in the English Channel were often subjected to a barrage of shelling from both sides of the water. On this occasion, so the story goes, shrapnel from the shells penetrated the church roof and split the baptismal font in two, at about the time the ceremony was due to have been conducted! This was handed down as a family memory and recent enquiries showed that there was indeed shelling on that day and the church was damaged by shrapnel.

(Fifty-three years later, when John took a trip back home to England with his wife Wendy in 1997, they visited Deal and photographed St Andrew's Church. John made enquiries of an old-timer at a local pub and was directed to his grandparents' old *Duke of Wellington*, by that time a private residence named Duke House.)

When John was five months old his father became an Intermediate Associate Member of the Institution of Production Engineers. Harry's long hours of study and his practical ability was beginning to produce dividends.

While Mabel and little John lived in Deal, Harry stayed on at their war-damaged home in London. By this point of the war the roof had been blown off for the third time, although their large, heavy, rectangular framed mirror survived.

'I had to keep doing repairs from the bomb damage,' Harry said. 'You went in the front door to a hallway and the stairs up. There was a sort of a recess where the phone was. The front door was blown in to where the telephone was. Phone wires were festooned around the dado, the decorative division between lower and upper parts of the walls. The water-pipes were underground, under the floor, so they were okay, and the electricity was also okay. But the front roof and back roof copped it.'

Harry rigged a tarpaulin over the space under the stairs to the second storey and slept there, continuing to live in the damaged house because it was actually more comfortable, he said, than the damp cramped Andersen shelter. Plumbing had remained relatively unscathed and he took his baths in the unroofed bathroom, looking straight up at the stars! (Enquiries in 2013 showed that this fortunate old house was still there then, though it retains no family connection. It was sold in June of that year for £287,500.)

In September of 1944, German V-2 bomb attacks began. These were genuine rockets, fired vertically into the stratosphere. Supersonic and flying at over 5,000 kilometres per hour, no-one could hear them coming, so there could be no warning. Over a thousand of these monsters wreaked havoc in the few months between then and January 1945.

All his life Harry had a tendency to be a little late for appointments, despite his meticulous planning. Mabel related how this habit of being late, which could be quite frustrating to others, possibly saved his life. All commodities were severely rationed during the war. From time to time, however, some sought-after items became available.

Harry remembered one occasion very well. 'Warners [a department store] had some pots and pans on sale, a rarity' he said. 'I got on my bike and went up there to the shop, up Clifton Hill. Then suddenly I was within a hundred yards of a V-2 rocket explosion! I remember a blank wall, with recesses, facing onto the street. There was this huge sort of double bang, and I was thrown off my bike. There were 200 people killed. If I hadn't been running late that day

'Anyway, when I got home I couldn't speak, my tongue was swollen and my hair was standing on end. It all came back to normal, of course. It was the shock.'

The War had touched most people in some way – Harry's cousin Private Phyl Kirkham (nee Carr) was suffering from typhoid fever when she came out of the Army. Peggy Carr, who was a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) at Aldershot's Cambridge Military Hospital, wrote later *"...From D-Day the 6th June I did not have one day off until the end of August by which time I, and everyone else because we were all in the same situation, was suffering from exhaustion.*

Blood for the wounded was in desperately short supply, and we were ...expected to make our own blood availableI gave two pints within a few weeks...

Harry's half-brother John (Jack) Soole had been serving in Germany at the end of the war. He was posted in a country area and did not see his family or his parents for some time. He said 'I returned to England and was de-mobbed in August 1946. I spent two or three weeks with Dad and Mum in the pub, [at Deal] then joined the Metropolitan Police where I was stationed in London.'



Jack Soole

block of police flats. As a member of the London Metropolitan Police, John was a "London Bobby". The term "bobby" stemmed from the name of Sir Robert Peel who founded the "modern" police force system in the 19th century.

On the 30th October 1946 John James Baker's little brother was born, in rather a hurry. Mabel, realizing that the baby was ready to arrive, had gone downstairs to get a bucket for hot water for the impending birth, but Frank must have been impatient. Without further ado, on the stairs of the family home, Frances (Frank) William Baker literally slipped into the world. Mabel – presumably after tipping out the water – caught the new-born baby in the bucket! According to his father Harry in later years, Frank was "in a hustle" ever since!

When the war ended in 1945, returned soldiers displaced 29-year-old Harry's position in the company. If he had moved to another company he may have found a position commensurate with his ability, but Mabel would not go north to the industrial areas. Distinctions between southerners and northerners were too much of a barrier for her. In her earlier work in the postal service in the north Mabel had had more than enough, she said, of 'brassy obnoxious women giving hard time in post office'.

The employment and family situation became critical. With two little children, "going colonial" with a fresh post-war start in another country seemed logical. They thought of Rhodesia, or South Africa, but were worried about possible future "problems" in those places. Then there was Canada (too cold), or New Zealand (too small), or Australia



Peggy Carr, Harry's cousin



Jack Soole as a London policeman

Harry went to Australia House where he was welcomed by a gentleman who asked him what he could offer Australia. When he said that he was an engineer and described his war-time work, he was told that South Australia badly needed men like him; new developments and industries were springing up in that state. Harry told his family ‘When I commented that he seemed to have a remarkable knowledge of the place, he told me that he should have a good knowledge, seeing that he was the Premier of the State!’ By chance he had met Thomas Playford, (later Sir Thomas) Premier of South Australia.

Impressed by Thomas Playford, it was then that the family decided to come to South Australia. They booked their passage, amid much consternation from the extended family. ‘You’re not taking those poor little boys to Australia – not that dreadful place!’ somebody was reported to have said. ‘You can go for a walk in the country there and not come back!’ As stated near the beginning of this story, there was a family rumour that “Uncle Fred” may have met with that fate. Australia was surely the end of the world!

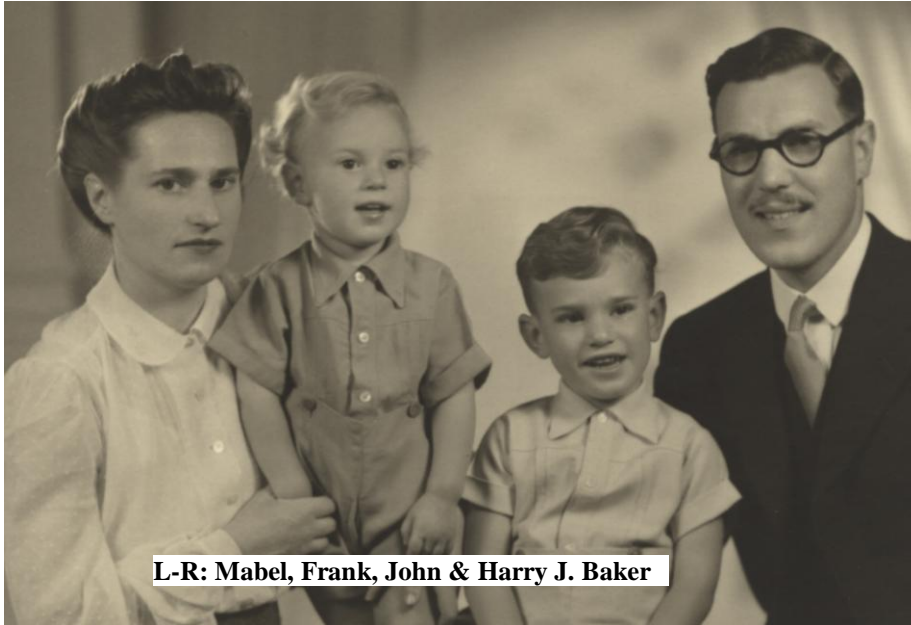
But Harry and Mabel were characteristically and optimistically, undaunted. Harry was to later write “*we knew nobody but were assured (by Thomas Playford) that willing people with qualifications should have no problems establishing themselves – [but] we had a rude awakening.*”

Harry and Mabel had no priority over the many Australian troops returning home after the war, so when they were still waiting 2 ¼ years after their application for a passage, they sold their house. They were then able to buy a first-class passage on the Orient Line’s R.M.S. *Orion*, otherwise they would have had to wait for another two or three years.

When the Bakers first booked their passage it was just prior to the government-assisted passage days, which began in 1947 and continued until 1981. In a major drive to populate Australia and drive the expansion of our manufacturing, mining and rural industries the Federal Government heavily subsidized immigrants, known somewhat derisively in Australia as “£10 Poms”. They had only to pay ten pounds (equivalent of twenty dollars) for their journey out, providing they were sponsored by family or friends so that they would not become a burden on the Australian welfare system. The “catch” was that once here, the immigrant had to stay for two years or pay the cost of the fare to the government. Most stayed in their adopted country for the rest of their lives.

Harry applied for his passport, which was issued at the Foreign Office, London on 8th December 1947. Beneath his name on the “*Name of Bearer*” line was “*Accompanied by his wife ... Mabel Doris Baker (and by two children)*” with a brief description of the parents’ height, hair and eye colour. Looking back, bureaucracy seemed so simple then, with an almost complete lack of security by today’s standards. Harry’s height was listed as 5 ft. 7 ¼ in. (app. 171 cm). For his passport photo he wore a suit, dark-framed glasses, sported a neat moustache, and looked quite handsome. Mabel’s photo was not so flattering and showed the strain of the war years on her thin face.

Harry must have been somewhat alarmed when he received in the post a plan of R.M.S. *Orontes* instead of R.M.S. *Orion* as he had been promised. Following a couple of telephone conversations, the management of the Orient Line sent a letter to Harry on 29th April 1948, apologizing profusely for the company's mistake, which was immediately rectified and the correct plan sent.



L-R: Mabel, Frank, John & Harry J. Baker

Once he knew he and his family was going to be on the right ship, Harry bought ticket no.11713 on 4th May 1948. The total cost for the family was (Sterling) two hundred and ninety four pounds and fifteen shillings, the very rough equivalent of about fifteen months' wages at that time.

There was a round of family visiting before they left, and studio portraits to be made - of Harry, Mabel and the two boys, and the little boys by themselves. It was such a big undertaking; they had sold their home and disposed of most of their possessions. They were crossing the world to a land they had only read about, leaving behind all their friends and entire extended family. Such an adventure!

Harry paid a man posing as a representative of an immigration agent five pounds, about equivalent to a week's wages for a qualified engineer, to guarantee the family being met in Adelaide by someone who would have accommodation arranged. The Bakers, scrupulously honest themselves, trusted him.

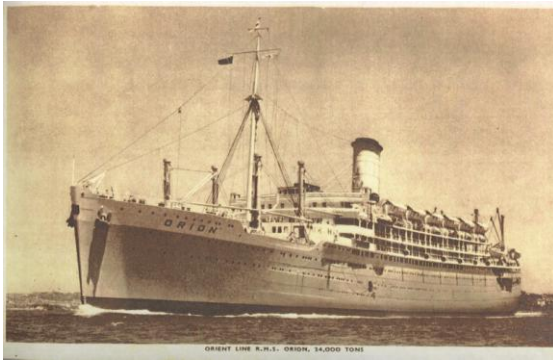
Chapter 3 – Across the World

The oil-fired turbine steamer R.M.S. *Orion* was built in 1935 at Barrow, a vessel of about 24,000 tons with steel twin screw propellers. She had actually been launched from Australia by wireless by the Governor-General, the Duke of Gloucester. It was evidently the first of the Orient Line steamers to have the hull painted in the distinctive honey colour. Converted to a troop transport in 1939, she suffered some damage in a collision with the battleship H.M.S. *Revenge* in 1941.

In 1946 she was re-fitted at Barrow for post-war service and resumed passenger service on 25th February 1947. She was apparently the first of the Orient ships to have air-conditioned public rooms in First Class. Fresh air was supplied to all cabins on board by a "punkah-louvre" system which could be individually operated by passengers for their own comfort. An electric radiator was also supplied in every cabin.

The Baker family embarked from the Port of London (Tilbury Landing Stage) on Friday afternoon, 9th July 1948. As First Class passengers they were allowed cabin trunks 3 ft in length, 1'9" wide and 1'2" high, (91 cm x 53.35 cm x 35.56 cm) representing 6 cubic feet (or about 1/6th of a cubic metre) of luggage. Children's prams were carried free of charge.

Men were accommodated separately from women, which meant that husbands and wives were also separated. Presumably this was to enable more passengers to be accommodated, but it came as a shock to some families.



Harry had an upper berth in cabin 531 on "F" deck, while Mabel and the children were in cabin 541/2 on the same deck – Mabel was in the upper berth and young John in the lower – while a cot was provided for little Frank, only twenty months old. Bathroom and toilet facilities were fortunately not very far from the cabins. A large playroom was provided for children, and there were regular church services.

"A" deck at the top of the ship was the sports deck. It was noted on the ship's plan that "*7-1/2 times around (the promenade deck) equals one mile (1.61 km)*" for those keen to work off the excesses of the good meals! Luncheon and Dinner was served in two sittings and it was emphasized that "*Smoking ... not allowed in the Main Dining Saloon.*" As well as the main saloon, a restaurant offering a more elaborate menu was provided, for which the luncheon charges were two shillings and for dinner, four shillings. These charges may sound ludicrous now but they were relative to income at the time.

John remembered the delicious cordials he had drunk on the ship. 'They were really special,' he said. 'It must have been the good quality water they were mixed with. Some years later, when Uncle John and Auntie Doreen Pearson migrated to Adelaide, we went to meet them when their ship docked. They took us on board and everyone had drinks – I had one of those cordials and it brought back all the memories of my own trip out.'



The Baker family had taken photos at several of the ports of call, including Colombo, capital of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) which was at that time an important artificial port built by the British to aid in the trade of tea, rubber and coconuts.

The Harbour Police rubber-stamped Harry's passport, showing that the Bakers were "*allowed on shore during steamer's stay in port of Colombo – No. 7 Colombo – 26 July 1948*".

Mabel's Kodak Box Brownie snapshot shows young John,

squinting in the glare, in his sleeveless sun-suit standing beside Harry in tropical whites against a background of palms. It is a valuable little preservation of history, because a visit to Colombo in 2020 revealed the entire port area had changed, with the location of the photo swallowed up in a giant modern sea reclamation project. Another photo shows Mabel on the sun-deck of RMS *Orion* holding toddler Frank on her lap as she chatted to another young mum beside her.



Matchbox from the Orion

At some stage during the trip Frank must have required the services of the ship's doctor, at a cost of fifteen shillings, as there was a receipt for this among Harry's papers.

On Monday 2nd August 1948 a British Red Cross Benefit Concert was presented by the Italian Opera Company in "B" deck's lounge. Passengers were entertained by excerpts from Bizet's *Carmen*, Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, and Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, among the many items presented.

The next day, RMS *Orion*'s first Australian port of call was Fremantle, where the passport was stamped simply "*Seen by Customs 2, 3rd August 1948, Fremantle W.A.*" prior to a horrendously rough journey across the Great Australian Bight south of the Nullarbor Plain. After one particularly traumatic night no passengers fronted for breakfast in the dining room except four year old John. He politely asked a greenish-hued steward 'Please, may I have bacon and eggs?' John remembers struggling to keep his plate under control while he cut his bacon, as crockery and cutlery slid from one side of the table to the other. "Sea-sick" was not in his vocabulary – not then, and never since!

A few days later on Saturday, 7th August 1948 the Bakers disembarked at Outer Harbor, South Australia under cloudless blue skies with their two small boys and their cabin luggage. A hint of spring was in the air; a light north-easterly breeze took the temperature to just over 19 degrees Celsius. What beautiful weather to greet the new immigrants!

There was a surprise welcome in store for the sea-weary passengers of the Orion. That Saturday's evening edition of *The Mail* (Adelaide, SA : 1912 - 1954), carried an article on page 3 under the headline of "*Concert at Wharf in Jazz*". "*Passengers in the Orion*", it noted, "*were given an impromptu jazz concert band when the ship berthed at Outer Harbor this morning. Dave Dallwitz's Southern Jazz Group lined up on the wharf and played a welcome to Graeme Bell's Australian Jazz Band, which has been touring Europe for the past 12 months and returned in the Orion. Later Bell's band brought their instruments on deck and joined in the concert, while passengers lined the rails and clapped appreciation.*" (Courtesy National Library of Australia, URL <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article55897344>)

By coincidence, in 1960 when I started secondary school at Adelaide Technical High School, David Dallwitz was my art teacher. I could not have foreseen then that nine years later I would meet the handsome young John Baker who would have been one of the Orion's passengers to enjoy Dave Dallwitz's jazz welcome in 1948!

Because their passport had been already stamped in Fremantle, there were evidently no formalities in Adelaide. 'From what I can remember, and what Mum and Dad said, we just simply walked off the ship,' John said.

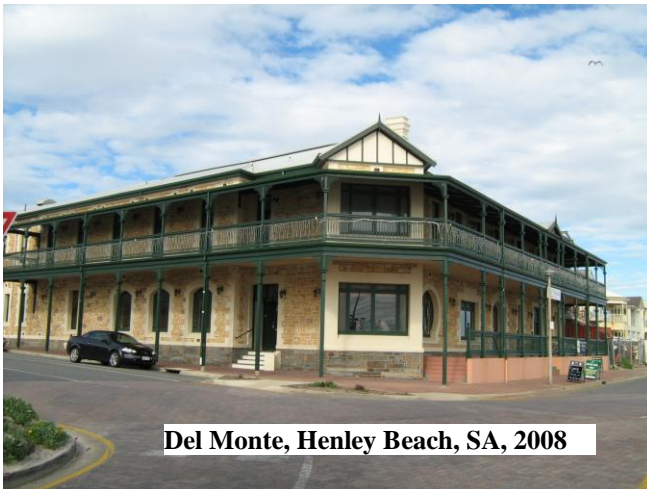
They waited on the docks to be met as promised.

Time ticked on but there was no sign of the person guaranteed to meet them and take them to accommodation. Imagine how young Harry and Mabel felt after a voyage travelling first-class from England, waiting at the docks with a twenty-one month old toddler, possibly still in nappies, and a just-four year old, knowing not a soul in a new country.

After a while, they had to conclude that their precious five pounds had benefited no-one but a con-man. The last train to the city from Outer Harbor station left. To a less level-headed couple this could have seemed like an inauspicious beginning to their new life. The Bakers went to a taxi-rank and asked a cabbie if he could recommend somewhere to stay. The obliging driver found them a room at the Del Monte Guest House on the foreshore at Henley Beach. They were told that they could stay there for only two weeks, until the September school holidays for which Del Monte was fully booked.

Before the government built hostel accommodation to provide for the mass subsidised immigration scheme, it was apparently quite common for Del Monte to temporarily house newly arrived folk.

'Mum and Dad just needed somewhere to get their bearings,' John said. 'They liked it at Del Monte.' The clean white beach was just across the road, the perfect spot for John and Frank to play and run off their energy. On the beach one day Mabel and Harry met the Jacka family.

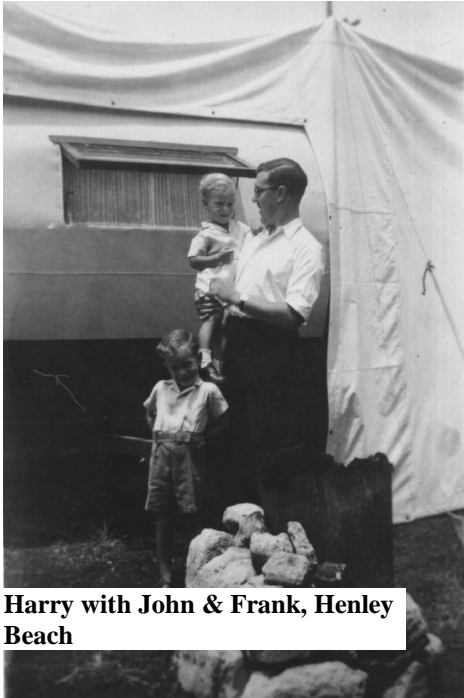


Del Monte, Henley Beach, SA, 2008

Milo, Silvia and Doreen were three older spinster ladies, and they and the Bakers soon became friends. Other friends were the Gamlens.

Del Monte was refurbished in 2008 as a residential hotel with dining facilities. On a luncheon visit there to celebrate the 60th anniversary of arrival in his new homeland, John went straight to a window opening onto a courtyard. 'I remember that door over there,' he said, pointing to the far side of the courtyard, 'and the front door as well. I can remember those lead-lights.'

During the Bakers' first train journey from Del Monte to Adelaide, Mabel had had a disquieting impression of their new country. They had come from war-ravaged London with meagre food-rations that were enough to sustain life but left no room for the slightest luxury. Although there had been rationing of food, clothing and petrol in Australia, it was not as stringent as that imposed in England. Nor had people been traumatised in the same way.



Harry with John & Frank, Henley Beach

‘The people here looked too well-fed and contented,’ she said later. It was something to which she found it very difficult to adjust. She felt that people here had not had to suffer the consequences of war and could not begin to understand what others had been through. It worried her that her children would be brought up in too “soft” an environment for their own good.

After leaving Del Monte, the Bakers lodged at The Chalet at Waterfall Gully for another few weeks. Their housing situation was becoming critical. Proceeds from the sale of their house in England were dwindling while the family paid for guest-house accommodation and meals. Harry wrote later, *“With two little boys, nobody would rent us a house and people weren’t interested in selling us a house.”*

One day the family visited their new friends, the Jackas, in their home behind the post office at Henley Beach.

Harry and Mabel mentioned their predicament. The sisters offered the use of an old shed on a block of land at 45 East Terrace, Henley Beach, that belonged to their brother Julian.

Mabel told how their first night was spent killing rats in the rat-infested shed. However, they soon had the place quite liveable. They also had a bond-wood caravan made, and a tent. The boys’ bunks were made up each night from the settees each side of the table. Mabel and Harry slept at the other end of the van. A storage cupboard was topped by a two-burner pressure stove. Fifty years later in 1999 a house with a brush fence opposite that block of land, was still there, although the block had long since been built on.

Mabel’s cousin, Betty Creighton, in her 90th year wrote of Harry and Mabel. *“I know they had a very tough beginning to their life in Australia but they were both strong enough to overcome their difficulties, and they were rewarded by fulfilment and happiness as time went on. Mabel was a lovely girl.”*

Harry Baker first tried to get employment with the Weapons Research Establishment because he was well-qualified with his war-time weapons experience. However the security clearance process was too slow and he needed an income. Harry applied to General-Motors Holden but the company considered him too highly qualified for what they were willing to pay. There were opportunities in Melbourne but he was determined to make his home in South Australia.

Harry was taken on as a development engineer at Pascoe Engineering, Woodville. Once his employment was secure he bought two blocks of land in the Adelaide foothills - Lots 65 and 66, which became No. 4 Nilpinna Street, Burnside. He and Mabel wanted a double block for their family home because, with their recent war-time experiences still fresh in mind, they were

determined that they should never need to go hungry. The extra land would make them self-sufficient if necessary.

The real estate agent was Shuttleworth & Letchford, who took a ten pound deposit on each block. The receipt for the full cost of two hundred and nine pounds and twelve shillings was dated 19th February 1949, each block being the same price of one hundred and four pounds and sixteen shillings.

Milo Jacka had earlier suggested that Harry buy investment blocks at ten pounds a block, near the shore at West Beach. ‘What? Those snake-infested sand-hills?’ was Harry’s understandable reaction. It was in reality a missed investment opportunity because within a few years that land became quite expensive and as a speculator he could have received a handsome return for his outlay. It later became home to the West Lakes housing development where ironically his daughter Pam, not born until 1951, would have her and her husband’s home on a beautiful lakeside property.

During the six months he worked for Pascoe’s, Harry developed and patented the first rotary drum Evaporative Cooler, the “Breezair”, which was an immediate success in the bush towns. ‘I put the prototype together with bicycle parts and other bits and pieces,’ Harry told us once. On 6th December 1948 Pascoe’s secured an order for 100 from the Zinc Corporation at Broken Hill at their first demonstration there.

From Pascoe’s, Harry went to Burford’s Engineering at Dry Creek as Chief Engineer. This company was part of the Lever organization so he became involved with not only soap-making machinery, but “Nurses” brand corn flour machinery as well!



Harry planned their house at 4 Nilpinna Street, Burnside, but once again, as had happened prior to emigration, the family was not entitled to any priority. What with the building permit application process and then permits for materials, their house took about three years to build. This was despite the fact that they built the house of freestone, attractive limestone cut from quarries in the south-east of the state, because as a readily available natural material it was not subject to restrictions. A number of Adelaide homes built in the late 1940’s – early 1950’s were

conspicuous by the inclusion of at least some freestone in their construction.

Harry later wrote *‘We were not allowed to move onto our land until the foundations were completed for the house and a store shed or garage was built, so we continued to travel up from Henley Beach each weekend [to work on the block].’*

'Going up Kensington Road in the tram one day, Mabel mentioned to Harry that she would like to go to St Matthew's Church because it looked "nice and friendly". The incumbent there was Canon Harold Giles, and after the first service we attended he asked 'You are new here; where do you live?' Canon Giles became a good friend and prepared us for confirmation ... he also happened to be the Chaplain of the Masonic Lodge at Norwood and was my proposer into Freemasonry'.

A slight hitch seems to have occurred with the confirmation. In order for Harry to be confirmed, he needed a copy of his Baptism certificate, and evidently the original must have been either mislaid or lost. However, Harry ended up with two Baptisms – the first was dated 28th January 1917 with a certificate issued on 10th October, 1951 (showing his given names as Harry James Thomas Baker) for his *"Baptism solemnized in the Parish of Camberwell, Diocese of Southwark and County of London in the Year 1917"*.

The second was for his Baptism dated 21st October, 1951, (showing his given names as Harry James), being a *"Certificate of Baptism (in the Diocese of Adelaide) administered in the Parish of Kensington South Australia, in the year 1951"*, signed by Harold Giles. He was finally able to be confirmed on 30th October 1951 at St Matthew's Church, Kensington.

Perhaps Harry had written to his old Parish of Camberwell in the U.K. to get the certified copy; maybe he was anxious that it would not arrive in time for his confirmation and so decided to have another baptism on the 21st – and then in due course the first certified copy arrived from England. Whatever the reasons, Harry was well and truly baptized! Mabel was confirmed at the same time as Harry.

"The block" at Burnside, with Salvation Jane tall enough to almost hide little John, had to be burned off before the builder would start, but, Harry said, 'the burning off process got a bit out of hand at one stage.'

A grey concrete-block "garage" with wooden floorboards was built first, with a shower and a 'Hygieno' toilet at one end, so that the family could move to the house site from Henley Beach. Hot water for the shower was produced by a chip heater, a fire-box with a water-jacket. These heaters were in essence a miniature boiler which, fed by "chips" or light kindling firewood, heated the water most efficiently. They were used by thousands of homeowners before the advent (or affordability) of gas and electric hot water heaters.

The caravan was moved to the Burnside block and became the Bakers' sleeping accommodation. Before their garden was established Mabel bought fruit and vegetables to preserve for future consumption, working under rather less than ideal conditions in this shed during hot weather. A "Metters No. 10" wood-stove kept everyone cosy – in summer as well as in winter.

Late in 1949 Harry Baker's mother Doll and her husband Bill Soole left London aboard the *Esperance Bay* (previously a ship of the Aberdeen and Commonwealth Line) for South Australia. Ninety-six people including the Sooles disembarked at Outer Harbor on 1st February 1950.

The Sooles arrived as Assisted Passage immigrants under the government-subsidised immigration scheme. Each immigrant paid only ten pounds for their passage. Those who were willing and able to adapt to their new country earned respect and friendship; those who dared criticise, or cling too closely to their old ways, soon earned the titles of “whingeing Poms” or “ten pound Poms”.



Bill and Doll Soole at Castlemaine

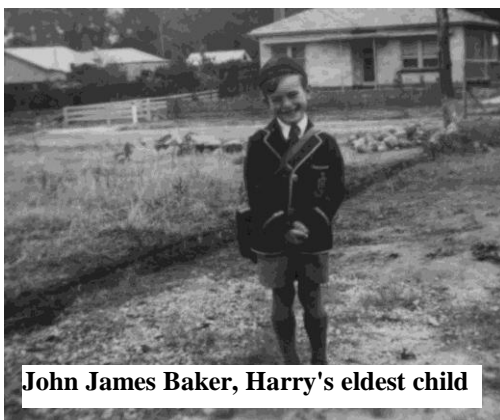
For a month or two Bill Soole worked as a gardener on a Portrush Road property owned by a wealthy businessman (the then-owner of Adelaide School of Music) before becoming resident caretaker/gardener at Castlemaine, Victor Harbor. In 1950 Castlemaine was owned by Mr Adams who also ran an art gallery on Flinders Parade, Victor Harbor in the old Wonderview Building (since demolished). A photo sent from Castlemaine by Doll to Mabel and Harry read *“April 1950 ...In front of the rock-pool. There are dwarfs & frogs & toadstools in the dark place behind us. The boys would love it.”*

Family friend Sylvia Jacka taught Harry to drive in her Austin 7, registration number

144-413. The two eldest Baker boys were later to buy this from Sylvia. But Harry’s first car in Australia was a Vauxhall Wyvern, a good sound car. It unfortunately had a “recalcitrant carburettor” meaning that Harry spent a lot of his weekend time meticulously cleaning the “carby” so that the car would start for the all-important Sunday drive!



The Austin 7



John James Baker, Harry's eldest child

John began school at Kings College while the house was under construction. Mabel bought milk for the family from Mr. Rosenbauer, who delivered to the house. If the family needed more milk they used to walk up to his dairy. Before the Bakers lived at No. 4, Mr Rosenbauer cut the Salvation Jane on the block by hand with a scythe for his cows.

Harry and Mabel wanted to expand their family and Mabel became pregnant soon after the walls began to rise on their new home. A Sunday drive proved fateful.

On the notoriously pot-holed Hallett Cove road, a shock absorber on the Vauxhall broke. Later that day Mabel miscarried her twin babies. Putting this sad loss behind her, she was soon expecting another baby and Pamela Ann Baker arrived

safely on 16th August, 1951 at the Burnside War Memorial Hospital, with the house barely finished.

Frank Baker recalled that when the family home was completed in 1951 there was a two year wait for a telephone connection. A public phone box close to home served the purpose until they could have their own black bakelite model. At that time, Frank said, there were fewer than ten Bakers in the Adelaide telephone directory, but none of them were related.

Once the house was completed the garage then housed the Vauxhall. That was, until the day Harry drove it into the garage with a spectacular result – the old floor-boards collapsed and the Vauxhall disappeared up to its axles! Harry wedged boards beneath the car and gradually managed to drive it out again. The timber floor was replaced by concrete by the Capaldo brothers. At that time there were many such Italian immigrants who were experts in concreting and terrazzo work.

The Bakers generally enjoyed good health, although the whooping cough epidemic of the early fifties that laid the whole family low is well remembered by John and Frank. Harry and Mabel's third son Andrew Peter Baker was born on 21st September 1953.

Simpsons (of the former Simpson washing machine empire in South Australia) had a dairy farm to the east of no. 4. The Simpsons' property was "Undelcarra". Frank became friends with the gardener there and through this he decided that he wanted to go "on the land". In later developments Nilpinna Street was continued through the old dairy farm for subdivision, but in the 1950's, it was still almost semi-rural; Chloey was little Frank's favourite cow and Eggie was "Undelcarra's" dairyman. The Burnside Christian Church was to the west of no. 4, but the Bakers attended St David's Church of England.

Nilpinna Street, Burnside remained unsealed until John was about eighteen; John recalled once getting into trouble with a teacher for saying that he lived in a "dead-end road" – he was supposed to call it a "cul-de-sac".

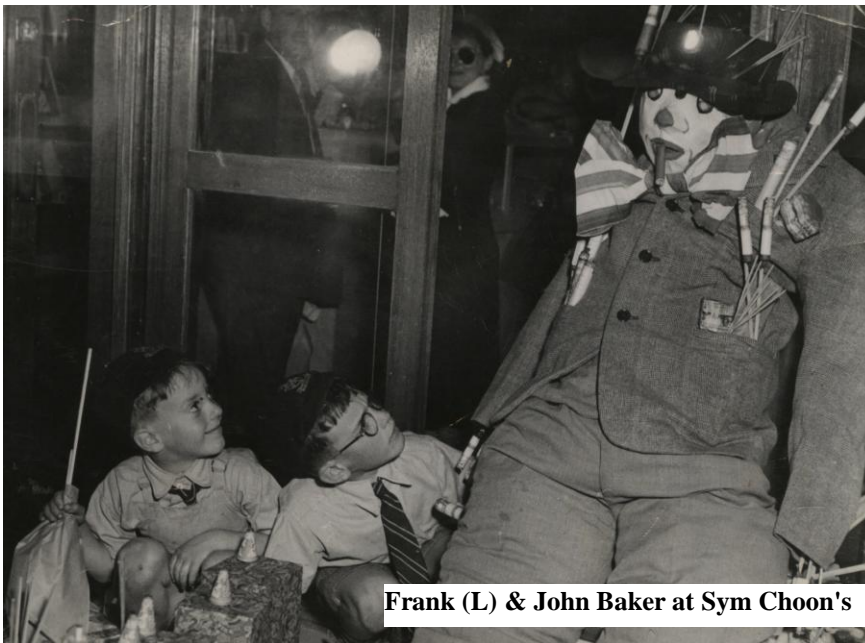
Across the road from the Bakers was a house later bought by Dr Basil Hetzel, the eminent South Australian medical research scientist who established a research department and endocrine diseases clinic at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the late 1950's. He has since been formally recognized for his huge contributions to medical science and academic institutions. John remembers "Uncle Basil" and his wife "Aunty Helen" not just as good neighbours but as very close friends of Harry and Mabel. The Hetzels later moved to a big rambling old house in the same area.

In the meantime, John had been having difficulties at school; his parents withdrew him from Kings' after nearly two years. He said that he learned very little in that time. One afternoon after school, when he was about seven, he ventured onto the street looking for the homeward-bound tram, only to be collected by a tram coming in the opposite direction when his foot got jammed in the rails. John was not injured, apart from being considerably shaken, but the incident caused quite an upset all round. He was taken to the doctor, pronounced merely shaken up, but questioned why he had been standing on the tracks. John said he had to get that close to read the

destination sign on the tram. After this John's eye-sight was tested and he was given eye exercises and prescribed glasses, but poor vision during his first two years at school gave him a bad start. He changed schools and repeated Grade 2 when he started at Burnside School.

John's time in Grade 3 at Burnside School is etched forever in his memory. He remembers being singled out for humiliating punishments by a teacher who seemed to take it as a personal affront that John had learning difficulties with spelling and reading. He excelled at number work but his good marks in that area were reduced to zero as Mrs M subtracted his spelling errors from his maths marks.

It was not surprising then that he and Frank took revenge on Mrs M one Guy Fawkes' night by blasting her kitchen window with a "four-penny cannon" (there were penny bombs but the cannons were the big ones!)... the Baker boys had the satisfaction of hearing shattering glass as



Frank (L) & John Baker at Sym Choon's

they hid in a deep culvert, as they watched Mrs. M run in fright, her cat under her arm, down the road to a neighbour's house. John completed his education at Pulteney Grammar School.

Guy Fawkes' Night, every 5th November, was always celebrated – whatever the weather. The children bought their fire-crackers well ahead of time, usually from Gladys Sym Choon's shop in Rundle Street East, and they always made a "Guy" to burn on the bonfire. This was in

the days before "duty of care" had been invented; children – and bigger children – had tremendous fun with fireworks in spite of anxious mothers. It was simply a much cherished 400 year old English tradition. (And coincidentally, John's first grandchild was born on 5th November!)

Not long before one Guy Fawkes' night the Baker boys found a snake in the paddock next door. Yells of 'Dad, come quickly – there's a snake!' brought Harry to the scene. 'With all the precision of the E.T.S.A. inspector that he was, Dad sliced off its head with the spade,' John said. The headless snake ended up on display, draped over a tree at the Guy Fawkes' party.

The Bakers continued their friendship with the Jacka sisters and John recalls riding his bicycle from Burnside to Henley Beach for piano lessons with the sisters.

After 18 months at Burford's Harry resigned to secure a job in the Design Department of the Electricity Trust of South Australia in 1950, beginning his career in Kelvin House on North Terrace, Adelaide. The Department then moved to Hindmarsh Building, on the north-west corner of Grenfell Street, Adelaide. (The building was still there in 2007).

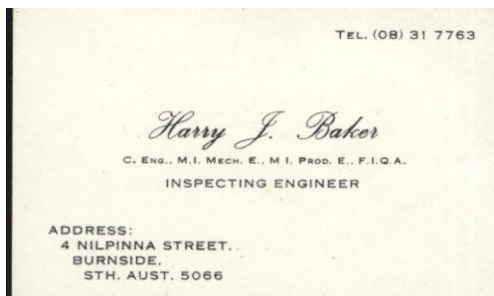
Ron, from the Sir Thomas Playford E.T.S.A. Museum at Kurralta Park, recalled Harry. 'I think I knew him first in about 1955,' he said. 'I worked under him for a while at Hindmarsh Building.'

Harry later wrote, of his career in E.T.S.A., *"Those were an interesting 26 years where I became the Inspecting Engineer of Mechanical Contracts for Power Station Construction and introduced the technique of the radiography of welded joints."*

Post-war expansion in housing and industry at that time in South Australia was phenomenal. Some 7,000 new houses were being built annually in the early 1950's. In 1948, the year the Baker family arrived, about 70,000 immigrants came to Australia and 72,000 were anticipated for 1949. The state's population then was barely 700,000. South Australia was forging ahead, and Premier Thomas Playford's (later Sir Thomas Playford) dream city of Elizabeth, north of Adelaide, was about to become a reality. The Electricity Trust had gained momentum to cope with the increasing demand for electricity, and needed a new office building to replace Hindmarsh and Kelvin Buildings.

Construction began at the new Eastwood site on Greenhill Road in April 1961 and the new building was officially opened on 7th December 1962. Staff from Hindmarsh Building had moved to the Eastwood building over three weekends in November. Harry worked on the ninth floor of the new building.

He was responsible, among other major power projects, for quality assurance of components supplied by contractors, and inspection during construction of firstly the Pt Augusta "B" station (opened 1964) and later the Torrens Island Power Station (opened 23rd February 1968). Harry was both feared and famed among the contractors for his ability to spot a potentially weak weld or some other fault, and to insist on it being rectified regardless of protest! As a result, while he was Inspecting Engineer everything worked very smoothly. A little sadly, this vital behind-the-scenes work earned him no great accolades during his career.



Harry was frequently absent from home on E.T.S.A. business, and at conferences with the Institute of Mechanical Engineers and the Australian Institute for Non-Destructive Testing. In January 1951 he was made an Associate (upgraded from his previous Intermediate Associate status) Member of the Institution of

Production Engineers. He actually belonged to four engineering institutions; of three of these he became Chairman of their Adelaide Sections. During his time at E.T.S.A. he met and enjoyed the company of some eminent scientists, one of whom was Sir Mark Oliphant.

In the meantime, John and Doreen Pearson (nee Spotswood) were still living in England and looking after Helen Spotswood, Mabel and Doreen's mother. The Pearsons were concerned that with Russia and the U.S.A. backing Egypt in the Suez Crisis of the mid-1950's, England could be left without back-up in the event of a possible nuclear war.

The Pearsons decided to emigrate to Australia with their nine-year old son Ian Scott, and Doreen and Mabel's mother Helen Mary Spotswood, under the Federal Government's assisted immigration scheme. Passenger lists from the South Australian Maritime Museum show that both John, an accountant, and Doreen were 43 years old and Helen Spotswood was a 73 year old widow when they arrived in Adelaide on the P. & O. liner S.S. *Strathnaver* on 3rd August 1957.

The Baker children's "Grandma Spotswood" lived with Harry, Mabel and family for a time. Grandma, whose fiery nature had not mellowed with age, had to share a bedroom with six year old Pam; John was a thirteen year old teenager, Frank was eleven and little Andrew only four years old. It was a recipe for stress as old family tensions re-surfaced. In the meantime, John and Doreen Pearson and their son Ian went to live in Tailem Bend where John Pearson took up his sponsored position as an accountant for Tower Motors. The small country town, of which the railway was the main feature, seemed like the back end of nowhere to the Pearsons, and they found their first summer of shimmering heat almost intolerable.

After about eighteen months they moved to a Housing Trust home at 11 Ifould Rd in the new city of Elizabeth, taking Grandma Spotswood to live with them until they were able to find a place for her in a nursing home.

In 1953 Bill and Doll Soole returned to England for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on 2nd June. They also wanted to encourage their son John and his wife Kay and children William John – always known as Billy - (born 13th June 1944) and Thomas Ian - thereafter Ian - (born 10th March, 1946) to emigrate to South Australia.

John and Kay Soole and their children were prompted to make the big move across the world by the prospect of a better climate, more space for their family, and the fact that they would be closer to their parents Bill and Doll, and John's half-brother Harry's family. In a letter to John and Wendy Baker in 2007, John wrote *'Kay and I, with Bill and Ian (their two small boys), sailed for Australia on the SS Otranto, P&O Line, in November 1953. We arrived in South Australia on Boxing Day 1953, and stayed with Mum and Dad.'*

'The first job I had in South Australia was at the Engineering & Water Supply Department at Kent Town in 1954. I finally finished up in the RSPCA in 1957 and retired from there on 17th July, 1985.'

John Baker also recalls his Uncle John Soole's very first job, organised by Harry to help him fulfil immigration requirements until he went to the E&WS Department, was driving trucks between Pt Augusta and the Leigh Creek coalfields.



In the mid 1950's Harry Baker joined the Freemasons. Canon Harold Giles, who had befriended the Bakers in their early days before their house was built, was Chaplain of the Masonic Lodge at Norwood and was Harry's proposer into Freemasonry. It was the beginning of a lifelong membership of that organization. Harry was initiated into Free Masonry on the 23rd February 1956 in the Emulation Lewis Lodge, No 69, Norwood and was admitted to the third Degree on 22nd November, 1956 in the Emulation Lewis Lodge, No. 69. He was installed as Master on the 27th August, 1964, and served as Worshipful Master of the Emulation Lewis Lodge, No 69 for one year. His Past Master's Certificate is dated 26th August, 1965. Harry was chosen as a Grand Steward for twelve months from 18th April, 1973. On 17th

October, 1979, Harry was honoured as a *"Past Grand Pursuivant of the Grand Lodge of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons of South Australia"*.

With the Vauxhall, Mabel and Harry continued their English beach-going traditions with visits to Port Willunga, Port Noarlunga, Henley Beach, Victor Harbor, Hallett Cove etc. On 20th February 1954 Harry and Mabel bought Lot 62, Shelley Avenue, Port Willunga, for a cost of one hundred and fifteen pounds. They paid a five pound deposit and monthly instalments of two pounds.

They always intended to build a holiday home on the block. Harry acquired large wooden packing crates, stripped the timber and machined the planks. Unfortunately the council changed their building regulations and the proposed holiday house was non-compliant. Harry re-designed it, but again the regulations changed and eventually the project was abandoned. Frank Baker, who retired in 2007 and spent most weekends away in his camper-van, recalled times in his boyhood when the family camped on the Port Willunga block, in an Army-style tent with a centre pole.



Andrew Peter Baker

The Baker children are never likely to forget the treat their mother prepared on one occasion. To concrete their long driveway at 4 Nilpinna Street, Harry organized a working bee one Easter. Mabel, with the best of intentions, made hot cross buns for afternoon tea. They were certainly hot – she mistook the cayenne pepper for mixed spice!

Harry wrote later: *"when my children were at school we all attended St David's Anglican Church at Burnside, where the children were prepared for confirmation. Mabel was active with the ladies' groups and I became a councillor and a synods-man, so we were all very much involved."* Harry

was a member of the Burnside Historical Society, among other organisations.

Young Andrew attended Burnside Practising School in 1960 but later went to Pulteney Grammar School. Like his parents, John loved boats and made a model yacht for his little brother Andy, nine years his junior. He used house-paint to waterproof plaster of Paris over moulded fly-wire, and together they enjoyed sailing the model at suburban beaches. Both Andy and John have owned, built and sailed boats in their adult years.

Frank also attended Pulteney Grammar School. He had wanted to be a farmer since he was a small boy, and he completed his education at Urrbrae, a school which catered for those with such an ambition. While at Urrbrae he went to work on a property near Jabuk, in the Mallee, for work experience. He went out there on the bus, he said, and lasted about three weeks. Among other jobs he was expected to “lump” three-bushel bags of wheat up a 45 degree ramp, stacking wheat at the railway siding. Frank said ‘I was only young and I was struggling – the bags had to be stacked in a certain pattern. When I said I was doing my best but the bags were too heavy the farmer said “What are you complaining about? If you ran a bit faster it wouldn’t be so heavy!”

‘I phoned Dad and when he realised how upset I was he drove all the way out there in the old Vauxhall Wyvern to retrieve me. I think that was one of the few times I ever saw Dad really riled up,’ Frank said. ‘He didn’t like the idea of his son, who he knew would have been doing his best, being so badly exploited and upset.’ Frank recalled that Harry actually wrote to the



Francis (Frank) William Baker

head at Urrbrae. In his letter he explained the situation, asking if the principal was aware of what was going on and whether the workplaces were ever checked to make sure teenage schoolboys were not being exploited.

During the Vietnam War, Frank joined the Royal Australian Navy. His plan was to serve for long enough to be able to afford to buy his own farming property. He was with the Moran Division, Recruit Training Section, H.M.A.S. *Cerberus* between November 1964 and March 1965 and as a 17 year old lad he served on the HMAS *Sydney* in Vietnam. However, disillusioned by the waste and devastation of war that he witnessed, Frank’s original plans did not eventuate; after an early discharge he took to travelling the world before marrying and settling down.

He always remained, at heart, close to the land and those who work it. One skill he used when he worked on farms as a teenager was his ability to divine water – he could tell where and how deep it was underground. An R.S.L. member, Frank’s main passions in retirement were following the country music circuit, fund-raising for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. He also reported for the South Australian Council of Country Music on several radio stations including Coast FM 88.7.

Between his E.T.S.A. work, the Anglican Church, the National Trust and the Lodge Harry was a very busy man. John remembers when, as a young man working in the University of Adelaide maintenance workshops, he had severe abdominal pain and got himself to a doctor. He was told to go home, pack a bag and report immediately to hospital. John was dropped off by his father at Burnside Hospital for an emergency appendectomy, on Harry's way to a Lodge meeting at Norwood. Harry called in on his way home to get a progress report!

Harry and Mabel were friends of Burnside locals Stephen and Necia Gilbert. Stephen, a well-known Adelaide architect, purchased an 1849 flour mill at Encounter Bay and converted it for use as a unique holiday home. The Gilberts' daughter Marianne, and Pam, John and Frank used to pick olives from local trees in the Burnside district. They then took the olives to Professor Cleland's olive-crushing plant on the corner of Dashwood Road and Beaumont Road (now a part of Glynburn Road) and sold them for pocket money. Other local family friends included Dorothy and John Potter, who had a holiday shack at Surfers Beach between Middleton and Goolwa on the South coast. A Goolwa boat scene which Dorothy painted for John's 21st birthday still has pride of place in John and Wendy's home.

A daughter, Kathleen Lydia, was born to 40-year-old John and Kay Soole in July 1961. John was an RSPCA inspector and rose in time to Chief Inspector. In his position he saw both the heart-warming and the heart-wrenching stories of animals in the care of humans. He was called out once to a rubbish dump from which the sound of "cheeping" was heard one extremely hot Christmas day. He found hundreds of helpless baby chickens hatching from eggs dumped by a hatchery, and had the unenviable task of disposing of them. From the old Belair Dogs' Home (demolished years ago after the Society opened its dog shelter at Lonsdale), he helped place abandoned or ill-treated dogs with good homes and kind owners. John Soole's last job before retirement was the position of resident caretaker at Douglas Scrub Girl Guide Camp where he was also responsible for the small native fauna reserve.

In 1961 John Pearson sent a brief note to Harry, thanking him for his "*help and encouragement*" in getting established in South Australia. It was written on the back of an announcement by Milne & Burgess, Chartered Accountants of 108 Gawler Place Adelaide to the effect that "*Mr. Peter McCracken Cudmore and Mr. Herbert John Scott Pearson were admitted to the partnership as from 1st July, 1961. The firm name remains unaltered.*" Harry and Mabel lost contact with John and Doreen after Bill Soole's death in December 1973. (Since 2015 John Baker managed, through the internet, to reconnect with his cousin Ian, John and Doreen's son).

In 1962 "Aunty Silvia" (Silvia Jacka) was sixty when she bought a new car and John and Frank were able to buy her ageing Austin 7. The boys used it to drive to Pulteney Grammar School. However this did not last long because of severe braking and other mechanical faults. Silvia had only ever driven the car at about 20 km an hour.

The resourceful Baker boys had a co-pilot system to work the brakes. The handbrake operated only on the front wheels, with the foot brake to the rear wheels. John said 'in order to stop, when I was the driver I had to change down through the gears (there was no synchromesh), at

the same time applying the foot brake to reduce as much speed as possible. While this was going on, Frank pulled on the handbrake. If the car wasn't sufficiently slowed before we got to the traffic lights, sometimes we had to turn into driveways etc in order to avoid a collision. We were bloody mad!'



The Baker children's "Nan & Grandpa" Soole (Bill was 69 in 1962) who were by then retired from Castlemaine, lived at 23 Simpson Road, Burnside. They eventually moved to Flat 7A at an address in Christie Avenue in Toorak Gardens.

During the 1960's Joyce Sykes visited the Bakers and in February 1965 Joe and Nance Kirby, by then retired, visited from England, travelling by ship, to see Nance's brother Bill Soole. Joe Kirby found it hard to comprehend the size of Australia and wondered how Sydney could be more than a day's drive from Adelaide.

There were several family outings with the Kirbys to the South Coast and to Kingston, as well as some interstate touring. After an interstate excursion with the Kirbys, Harry penned, '*with apologies to Banjo Patterson*' a few lines that help illustrate his droll humour:

‘On a Memorable Trip

*The Kirbys and the Bakers
They passed a million acres
When on the road to lovely Canberra.
The trip went really smooth
And the passengers were soothed
Into slumber while the driver
Put his toe down with a smile
And in one hour and a quarter –
Although he shouldn't oughter –
Covered just about a hundred mile –
They reached their destination
And after celebration
Looked round the sights of city
And it really was a pity
That time did not permit them tarry more.
So they continued in their journey
To Cooma in the Snowy
Thrice through the Great Dividing Range –
It certainly was thrilly
On the road to visit Milly
Who lives among the hills of Dandenong –
One night with her was all that*



Pam Baker with miniature poodle Toby

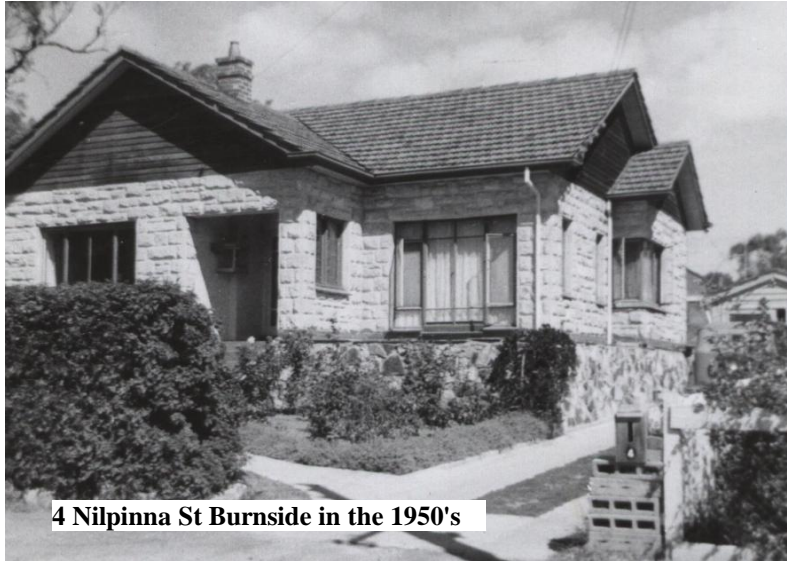
*They could stay and Arrarat
was where they slept the coming night –
Then on through Prince's Highway
Arrived back home the next day
To complete a happy trip from Adelaide.'*

In the 1960's Jack Soole gave the Bakers a little white poodle named Toby whom he had rescued in his capacity as an RSPCA inspector. Like quicksilver, the little poodle dashed to and fro as he accompanied the Baker boys on their forays into the foothills, and on hikes to Mt Lofty he raced endlessly up and down the hills. His curly white beard was permanently tannin-stained from the tea he liked to slurp out of the saucer. Mabel always gave him the last bit of all her many cups of tea.

Although he was never an enthusiastic gardener, Harry did all the hard work associated with the landscaping of the double block at No. 4 Nilpinna St. and was

justifiably proud of the results. He planned everything on paper first. The house had red-painted cement steps leading up to the front porch; to the right of these was a lovely rose garden. On the

left was a wisteria, magnificent when in full purple bloom, trained over a trellis outside the dining room. On the front lawn a lovely persimmon tree held red-gold globes of fruit and in autumn cascaded its brilliant leaves onto the lawn. An enormous tecoma hedge at the front gave shelter and privacy. Harry's carefully made slate paths and stone garden walls were a feature.



4 Nilpinna St Burnside in the 1950's

At the back of the house, grape vines gave Mabel and Harry an opportunity to try a little occasional wine-making. They grew fruit trees and preserved the crops. Terraced garden beds marched up the sloping block, yielding all-year round vegetable crops. In the early days, however, the first terraces that Harry built proved a disaster when the heavy soil water-logged fruit trees and other plants in winter. All his hard work had to be dismantled to allow the soil to drain. Weeds

and grass flourished for a while.

Jack Soole once gave the Bakers an orphaned lamb which had come to the R.S.P.C.A. and Harry made a portable octagonal "fold" for their new grass-eating pet. The children loved the sheep but unfortunately she died from kidney failure due to a toxic overdose of soursobs.

Having survived two world wars and the big depression of the 1930's, one of Mabel's favourite and frequent sayings was "waste not, want not" and this ensured that none of the Bakers ever left a skerrick of food on their plate! They always had an English-style cooked breakfast. The Baker boys remember sausages, eggs, fried bread, bacon, porridge, toast and marmalade. There were ample packed lunches for school, and substantial dinners – steak and kidney puddings, roasts and stews were favourites, with pre-dinner drinks (for the adults), hors d'oeuvres and "sweets" afterwards.

Harry often joked to waiters when dining out "That was very tasty, thank you. All that's left is the pattern on the plate and I'm afraid I can't eat that!"

Mabel made as many of her children's clothes as she could, using an old hand-cranked Singer sewing machine. She turned the handle with one hand and guided the fabric with the other. Her son Frank remembered it well. 'If Mum was trying to sew heavy fabric, when it got so tough she couldn't turn the handle any more, one of us kids had to grab the wheel and turn it so the needle would go through the material.' Mabel unpicked old adult garments and re-cut the fabric to make new clothes for the children. She always went to the post-Christmas sales, particularly at David Jones department store (previously Charles Birks) after they came into existence, to

buy good quality fabrics and clothes at reduced prices, in an era when “sales” were reserved for special annual events.

A few of Mabel’s relatives appear from census records to have been dressmakers by profession – her aunt Emily Creighton and her paternal grandmother Sarah Spotswood, born in 1845, were both listed in the 1901 Census as dressmakers, so the skill was undoubtedly in the family genes.

Due to a bout of hepatitis, with a prolonged absence from school, John failed his Leaving examination. He felt obliged to remove the burden of his Pulteney college fees from his parents to give his younger brother and sister a fair go. Instead of university and a professional career, in 1961 John gained himself an apprenticeship in fitting and turning at Perry Engineering at Mile End. What he had really wanted to do was work with wood, but it was not to be.

Harry and Mabel were keen for John to continue his studies and go to university and with this in mind they built an additional room, with an en-suite bathroom, at the rear of the house, separated from the main building by a breezeway. Harry drew up a specification for this dated 9th October 1964. Until then John, Frank and Andrew had shared the one bedroom.

When the house was first built there was no hot water service. But Harry, with some extra fittings, plumbed the cold water pipes in such a way that the old green Metters No. 10 wood-stove, which had been transferred from the garage to the new house, doubled as a hot water heater.

At the same time as the new room was built in 1964, some alterations needed to be made to the kitchen. The old stove was removed and a new modern gas stove installed. Mabel also became the proud possessor of a kitchen sink and draining board; prior to this she had “made do” with a washing-up bowl. A laundry was also created; the “Simpson” washing machine had occupied the corner of the kitchen for many years. These were the days before clothes dryers were a part of most households.

The Simpson washing machine had a formidable clothes-wringing gadget mounted above it. Wet clothes were fed (with the closed end of pillowcases going through first!) between a pair of rubber rollers which squeezed the water out most efficiently. They did not discriminate between clothes and fingers but a “panic” bar, if thrown upwards in time, could spring the rollers apart to release anything not meant to be wrung!

During his apprenticeship John won prizes for drawing, maths and theory but had difficulty achieving good results in the practical aspect. One of the reasons was that apprentices were not given a wide range of jobs; for three out of his five years John sharpened circular saws, carbide tip tools and had to band-saw in two the coal pulveriser end-cover plates (used in the Pt Augusta power station). Perry’s nominated him for Apprentice of the Year and although he did not win, John went on to become a skilled toolmaker at General Motors-Holden’s Woodville plant and other manufacturers.

Pam had begun her education at Burnside Primary School. One day when John got home from school Mabel said ‘Pam’s up a pepper tree in the lane near Hetzel’s [the neighbour previously

mentioned] and I can't get her down.' John coaxed his little sister out of the tree, assuring her that she would not be in trouble! Evidently when her daughter had not come home at the usual time Mabel investigated – on foot as she did not drive – and found that Pam, then only in Grade 2, had rescued a little boy from a Grade 7 bully. She was a compassionate girl sensitive to those in trouble.



Pam Baker with young brother Andrew, & parents Mabel & Harry Baker

Pam had given the bully boy “what-for”, including a black eye and a thick lip, and sent him scarpering. This was all very well but posed a dilemma for her parents.

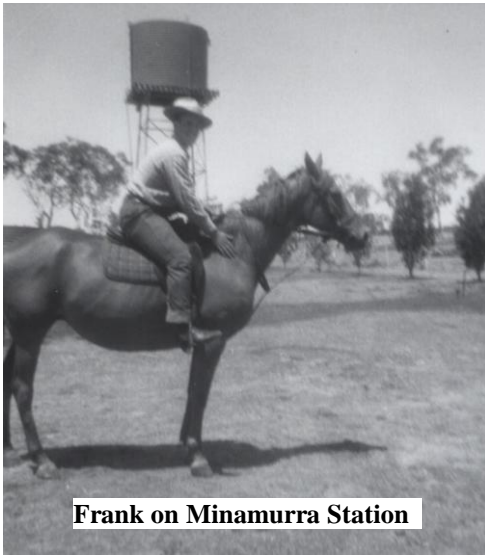
‘Now dear,’ Mabel reportedly said to Harry. ‘What are we to do with Pam? We must *do* something! We must put her amongst young ladies to learn to become one.’ So it was off to St Peter’s Girls School, in Stonyfell, for young Pam. She may have learned more lady-like behaviour, but Pam never lost her big-hearted compassion for others and her strong moral sense of right and wrong. Not surprisingly, she went on to study for a career in nursing, although circumstances were to prevent her from completing her training.

While in his teens in the 1960’s John used his wood-working skills to build an 8 ft. timber dinghy in his bedroom, not exactly the use of this room that his parents had intended! The little boat gave him much pleasure and he often rowed at Horseshoe Bay, Port Elliot. He once rowed out to rescue then-Premier Don Dunstan’s son Andrew. The youth had become completely exhausted after taking his surfboard well beyond the breakwater in an off-shore wind. He was being carried rapidly far out to sea before John took him on board the dinghy and rowed back to shore against the strong northerly.

At this time John’s younger brother Frank was engaged to Louise Dunn of Meningie, a relationship which later ended. Louise and John met each other again by chance some twenty years later when John and his wife Wendy moved to Victor Harbor in 1982. They discovered that Louise, married to Graham Wittkop, was living there with her husband and their three children. The youngest was in John and Wendy’s daughter Valerie’s class at school. It is indeed a small world.

John joined the Pulteney Grammar School Old Scholar Rover Scouts and was later an Assistant Scoutmaster at Rose Park. He enjoyed camping and hiking. During his holidays in the 1960’s John sometimes joined his jackerooing brother Frank. On one such occasion he worked together with Frank on Harry Ramsay’s property on the West Coast. One Saturday, after a night on the town in Pt Lincoln, they decided to sleep in the car rather than drive back to the station. A little way out of town they took a back-road in the dark and settled down happily for the night. In the morning they woke to find themselves in the local cemetery!

Frank also worked on stations in the south-east of South Australia. John spent a working holiday with his brother on Barton Pope's Yarrandale Station, driving the truck to the railhead at Taillem Bend.



Frank on Minamurra Station

Frank bought a Valiant utility before he went to the South-east. He used to gather up salvage from the station dumps, bring it back home and sell it to Mr. Stott, who had a salvage yard on Lockwood road near the junction with Nilpinna Street, Burnside. As a jackeroo on Yarrandale and Minamurra stations in the South-east, among other jobs Frank chased 'roos on horseback, sheared sheep, cleared scrub, drove a combine harvester, and shot rabbits and foxes.

After leaving Meningie, Frank took his ute and went to Tasmania where he worked in the mines at Renison Bell as a maintenance fitter and lived in his caravan. Frank went to answer a call of nature one day, leaving a pan

on the stove, and his caravan burnt down when the curtains caught alight. It was an expensive trip to the toilet! He had used a wardrobe in the van as a pantry, well-stocked with tinned food. After the fire the contents were discovered melted into a messy stew. At the time Frank was working exhausting double shifts.

John joined him in 1969 for a few months as a fitter, boarding in the single-men's quarters in Zeehan. Mabel and Harry went to Tasmania to visit Frank who loaned them his ute so that they could tour Tasmania.

At about this time Pam Baker began her nursing training, living in the "Nurses' Home" at Royal Adelaide Hospital. Early in 1969 she went nursing at Kingscote Hospital on Kangaroo Island where she met her first husband-to-be Graeme O'Donoghue. Back on the mainland, Pam and Graeme married on 12th June, 1970 at the Rosefield Methodist Church in Highgate.

Graeme O'Donoghue suffered from nephritis, an inflammation of the kidneys which results in the kidneys being unable to filter the blood, ultimately causing kidney failure. He needed regular dialysis treatment. Pam gave up nursing and went to work for Faulding's the pharmacists, so that she had more flexibility to care for him when necessary. He had a kidney transplant operation in November 1970.



Pamela Baker, trainee nurse

Frank Baker was an enthusiastic traveller and in 1970 he and his mate Peter Brandt had a “great Aussie trip” in a panel van, “The Overlander”, driving and working through every state in the country.

Both the Soole children and Harry’s children were growing up, and Harry and his half-brother John had moved on in their respective careers. In October 1970 Harry Baker was presented with his 20-year service badge by E.T.S.A.

By 1970 John Soole had become Chief Inspector of the RSPCA. He and his wife Kay and their family lived in the Society’s headquarters on Greenhill Road, Wayville. Their back-yard was a convenient parking spot for any in the family wanting to visit the Royal Adelaide Showgrounds, only a few metres away. John Soole’s son Billy married Georgette (Jedda) on 31st January 1971, with Kathleen as bridesmaid.



John(Jack) Soole, Chief Inspector RSPCA



John Baker married Wendy Clark 6th Feb 1971. Her sister Lyndell was bridesmaid.

This family wedding was followed closely by another; Harry and Mabel’s eldest son John married Wendy Robyn Clark on 6 February 1971 at the Plympton Methodist Church, near her home. John had met Wendy at the Hindley Street ice-skating rink not long after his return from Tasmania in September 1969.

Wendy recalled being warmly welcomed by Harry into the Baker family with all of its family traditions and sense of solidarity. Doll and Bill Soole were by then quite elderly but Harry’s mother, “Nanny Soole” to his four children, was a kind, thrifty old lady with sharp blue eyes and a sense of humour. She had brought her pie-making traditions with her to Australia and made a batch of little pies for most Saturday night dinners at the

Baker home. For years this was a family ritual. Almost every Saturday the men of the family – Bill Soole and Harry in the beginning and later as they became old enough, John and Frank – went to the Robin Hood hotel on Portrush Road for drinks. They then returned to 4 Nilpinna Street where the pies were ready, hot and scrumptious. After the meal Harry, Mabel, Doll and Bill played the card game Solo Whist.

Nanny Soole kept alive more than one tradition. Every Christmas at the big family dinner complete with turkey, ham, and all the delicious trimmings, she would quote George R Sims’ poem “Christmas Day in the Workhouse”. In her parents’ day, the so-called “charity” of the Workhouse was a grim reality for many people in England and she wanted to impress on her own family how fortunate they were. They all listened in respectful silence as she recited

*"It is Christmas Day in the workhouse,
and the cold, bare walls are bright
with garlands of green and holly,
and the place is a pleasant sight;
for with clean-washed hands and faces,
in a long and hungry line
The paupers sit at the table,
for this is the hour they dine."*

One of Nanny Soole's sayings was 'tis better to be born lucky than wealthy'. She also liked to raise her glass with an old toast *'Here's to us, there's none like us, and them's that was is dead ...'* Perhaps it was from his mother that Harry inherited his strong sense of ritual and tradition.

Harry was deeply religious and always said, with complete sincerity, a simple grace at the beginning of a meal – *"For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us **truly** thankful."* However, his delightful sense of humour could at times be wickedly irreligious. At one particular Christmas dinner, as usual, as many of the extended family as possible were squeezed into the dining room. Grace had been said, dinner served, and conversation silenced as everyone tucked in to enjoy the turkey. Then Harry intoned in a deep voice ... 'And nought could be heard but the sound of mastication.' Mabel, by the look on her face, was the only one not amused!



Harry (on right) at IEI function, about 1972

and visit programme in South Australia.

Harry had become a Member of the Institution of Engineering Inspection on 16th October 1964 – which entitled him to use the initials MIEI after his name – and this was followed on 1st January 1970 by his becoming a Fellow of the same Institution (FIEI). In 1971/72 he was the Branch Office Vice-Chairman of the Institute of Engineering Inspection, London. By 1972 the name had been changed to the Institute of Quality Assurance and Harry was the 1972/73 Chairman, co-ordinating the year's lecture

On 12th December 1969 young Andrew Baker met Annette Meriel White, the girl who would be his future wife. In January 1973 Andy joined the P.M.G.'s (Postmaster-General's) Department as a trainee in Engineering Technology, from which section he later moved to quality assurance.

As mentioned before, so many of Mabel's forebears were involved with seafaring that she must have had a touch of saltwater in her veins! At times Mabel had mentioned anecdotes from her childhood, of going down to the London docks to meet an uncle returning from a voyage, and

of the hustle and bustle there – the shouts and noises of the docks and the smells of tar and cargoes from exotic places.

Mabel's cousin Dorothy (nee Creighton) used to tell her family about Grandpa Fred Creighton, who, it was told, designed the cranes used to unload the ships. Dorothy's niece Terry wrote *'All the Creighton girls went down to the docks with him regularly. According to Auntie Dorothy, he apparently used his swordstick [a hollow walking stick containing a blade] to spear rats whenever any of the needy dockers began to crowd too close to this small and relatively well-dressed family, just to let them know that he could fend them off if necessary!'*

Mabel had always fancied having a boat. In July 1973 Harry, Mabel and Andrew all gained their Certificates in Basic Seamanship and Safe Boat Handling with the Australian Volunteer Coastguard. It was not a prerequisite to having a boat licence but they decided that they should have as much knowledge as possible before embarking on their boating adventures. Harry and Mabel bought a 12 foot fibreglass dinghy with a Seagull outboard motor.

Once they had their boat, Mabel often went fishing with Andy in the North Arm of the Port River. As Andrew said, 'We didn't always catch anything, but Mum loved the boat and her fishing.' They tried to get out at least once a month. Harry joined them whenever he found time among his other commitments. Andrew later bought a Johnson outboard motor to replace the unsophisticated two-stroke Seagull.

Frank Baker loved travelling to discover other places and cultures and in the early 1970's spent months overseas. Sometimes he travelled alone, well off the beaten tourist track, and sometimes he went with those he met along the way to many places which might now be forbidden to tourists or considered too dangerous - including the Khyber Pass. On 6th October 1973, at Barking in England, Frank married Barbara Jean Harris, a Canadian girl whom he had met on his travels. Their reception was in a little English pub close to Win (Mabel's cousin) and Mick Rowlands with whom they had stayed for a while before the wedding.

Bill Soole always smoked. 'Give us a fag, Doll,' he used to say, even when he was in the grip of emphysema. While Frank was still overseas, his "Grandpa" Bill Soole died from broncho-pneumonia in Monreith Private Hospital, Toorak Gardens on 10th December 1973, aged eighty years. He had suffered chronic bronchitis and emphysema for fifteen years and also had prostate cancer. His beloved Doll had nursed him for as long as she could manage.

Harry and Mabel and their adult children decided that it was prudent to become Australian citizens, and did so on 22nd May 1974. Due to a change to the provisions of section 11C of the Citizenship Act 1948-1973, this had become necessary if they wished to return to Australia in the event of a trip abroad. They were now entitled to use either an Australian or British passport with their dual nationality.

Andrew Peter Baker, youngest of the three Baker boys, married Annette White on 21st December 1974 at Rosefield Methodist Church, Highgate. She was a musician and music teacher, working both in schools, colleges and from home with private students. Annette had two brothers but was the only daughter of June and Hedley White, whom Harry knew well.

Hedley, like Harry, worked for E.T.S.A. He was the Critical Path Programmer, Power Projects, responsible for creating timelines for major projects. Whenever Harry, in his inspection capacity, rejected something, it impacted on Hedley's timeline; however, Hedley could then re-arrange the order of progress so that the job still finished on time. Both men worked closely together, although physically they worked at opposite ends of the office in the west wing at Eastwood.

The years were moving on. In 1975 Harry and Mabel went back "home" for three months' long service leave to England and Europe. It was their first visit since leaving there in 1948. Doll Soole went with them and stayed with Nan and Len Schafer. Many of the English houses were so very different from those in Adelaide. 'There wasn't much space, even with two storeys,' Harry said. 'Nan and Len's house – and all the others in the street – were only nineteen feet wide [not quite six metres].'

While in the U.K., apart from visiting their numerous cousins, aunts, uncles and old friends, Mabel and Harry took a coach tour around Cornwall. Harry later related proudly to the family here how, at one point on the tour, he had stood up in the bus and made an announcement to all his fellow travellers. 'This,' he said, to Mabel's embarrassment, 'is where my first son was conceived in September 1943!' Appropriately, while his parents were in the U.K. they received a telegram from that very "first son" - John James Baker - advising that their first grandchild would be born in November 1975.

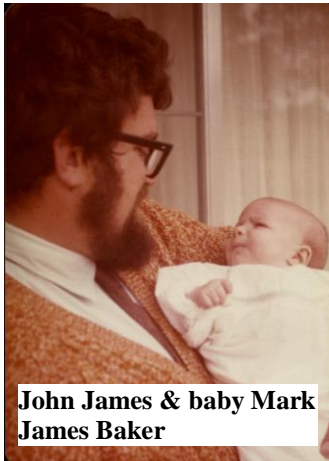
During their trip Mabel decided to delve a little further into her own family history. She found to her consternation and everyone else's fascination that one of her ancestors was a Welshman, Henry Morgan, a buccaneer who ruled the seas from Jamaica late in the seventeenth century.

The buccaneers were originally a rather motley assortment of French-originating cattle-farmers who had organized themselves over time into a fierce group of rebels against the Spanish monopoly in the Caribbean, seizing the spoils of many a Spanish galleon loaded with gold from the region. Many nations, including England, were strongly opposed to the Spanish.

The decision by Spain to send an Armada to invade England in 1588 had probably made the English less than favourably disposed towards the Spanish and it followed that a "blind eye" was turned to some of the buccaneers' activities. The swash-buckling Henry Morgan was actually imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1672, but was released only two years later.

Remarkably, Morgan was returned to the West Indies as Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica, which perhaps says something for his loyalty and leadership skills. However, at this point in her research, Mabel stopped –having a buccaneer in the family background was too much of an embarrassment!

On 14th May 1975 Kay Soole died suddenly from respiratory causes. John, widowed with young Kathleen to care for, later married Helen Dunlea on 3rd March 1980. This lovely lady brought her son John to her new marriage. He was known for many years as "Little John" to avoid confusion with his step-father.



**John James & baby Mark
James Baker**

Mark James Baker, “the first son of the first son” to quote Mabel, was born by Caesarean section to Wendy and John on 27th November 1975. Valerie Robyn Baker would follow on 2nd March 1978.

Before Harry retired he and Mabel also spent nine weeks’ leave in New Zealand, spending some time with his cousins Pat and Joyce in the South Island, and also with Wendy Baker’s friend Levinia Potton and her family in the North Island. They brought many memories, photographs and souvenirs home from their long motoring holiday.

On Harry’s retirement from E.T.S.A. in September 1976 a copy of a framed cartoon drawing was presented to him by fellow Trust workers, showing their good-humoured appreciation of Harry’s love of food, his tendency to run late and his keen eye for detail that made him so good at his job.

Harry must have felt keenly for his daughter Pam when she lost her first husband Graeme, who passed away on 16th June 1976. His kidney transplant had given him six more years than he would have otherwise had. He and Pam built their home at Salisbury, north of Adelaide, at about the same time that John and Wendy were having their home built at Mylor.

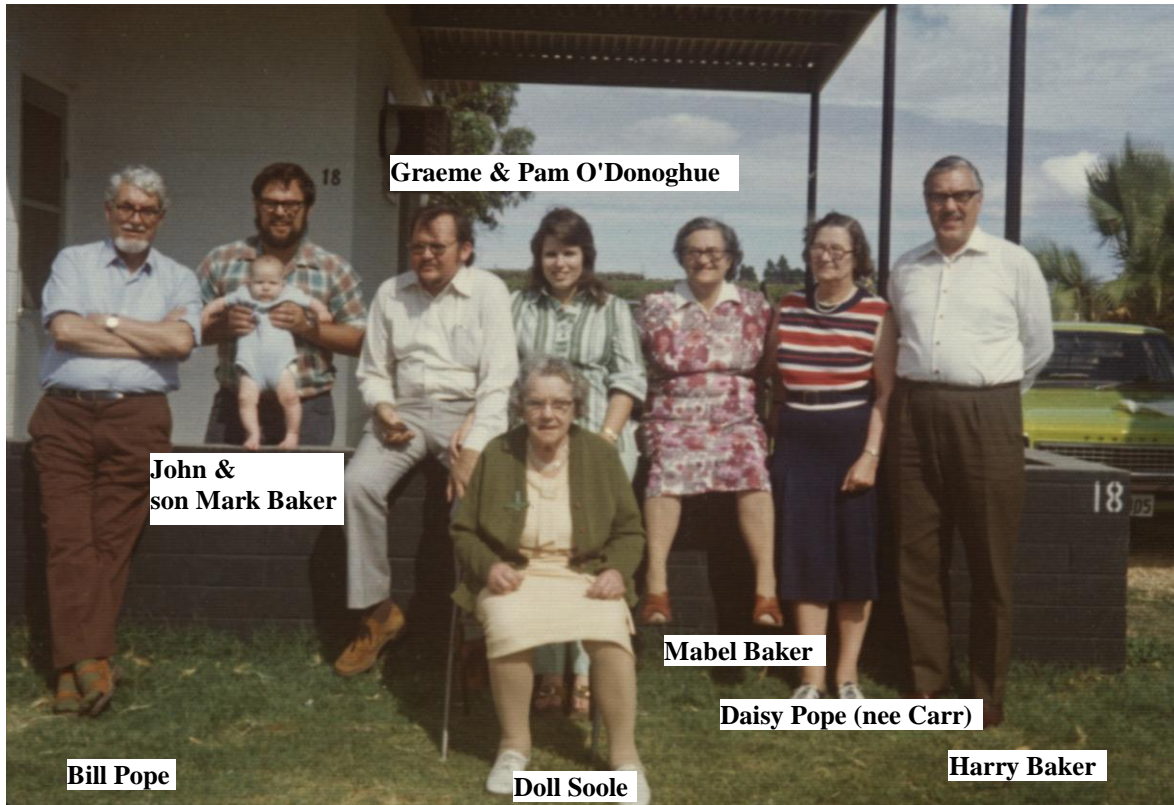
Pam had a lot of support during this traumatic time from both her own family and that of Graeme’s. Pam also had a strong, supportive relationship with her mother-in-law Joan O’Donoghue. Joan knew some of Pam’s pain, for her husband suffered from skin cancer before it claimed his life. Graeme’s younger sister Joanne (Jo) has stayed in close contact with the Tiggemanns.

Joan O’Donoghue remained, until her death in 2020, very close to the Tiggemann family; Jodie, Katherine and Chris always loved Joan as their special “Nanna” and she and her daughter Jo were always included in Baker family celebrations. How different was Pam’s family situation from that of Doll Soole way back in 1921 with regard to her relationship with her deceased husband’s family!

After Graeme’s death, Kevin Tiggemann, one of his friends and a fellow Kangaroo-Islander, became a close friend to Pam. Friendship soon turned to a serious relationship and although it was only the year following her loss of Graeme, no-one in the family was surprised when Pam and Kevin announced their engagement and forthcoming marriage. The venue was the Registry Office in the beautiful heritage building Edmund Wright House, King William Street Adelaide on 30th November 1977.

On 28th March 1977 she and Kevin had bought an older-style house at 18 Graham Place, Prospect – a suburb which was then beginning to enjoy resurgence in popularity as a residential area.

1978 was a busy year for Pam and Kevin. They first started their office equipment company Total Business Equipment on 1st May, at premises in Gilbert Street Adelaide. Harry and Mabel followed their progress with great interest. On 30th September 1978 they were delighted with the arrival of Jodie Ann, their first grandchild by their daughter.



One highlight of the mid-1970's was a visit from England by Harry's cousins Bill and Daisy Pope (nee Carr), who enjoyed a holiday with Harry, Mabel and family on a Liba-Liba houseboat on the Murray as part of their "Antipodean" trip.

In 1977 "Nanny" Doll Soole, now old and frail, could best be cared for in a nursing home, and Resthaven at Leabrook was her last residence. Doll Soole died on 1st January, 1979 aged 85 years, about a month after a fall fracturing her femur. She had lived long enough to enjoy the arrival of three great-grandchildren.

Katherine Jane Tiggemann was born to Pam and Kevin on 17th October 1979. With two lively little girls not quite thirteen months apart, and a business to run, they had their hands full and Harry and Mabel helped out whenever they could.

In the late 1970's and early 80's the Old Council Chambers (of the Burnside Council, on Glynburn Road) were restored and re-opened for use as the office of the Anglican Parish of Burnside St David's Church. Harry, as a member of both St David's and also the Burnside Historical Society, was formally recognized for the great amount of work he put into this project, including writing specifications and drawing up plans.

Chapter 4 – Life at Victor Harbor

In the text of a speech he wrote many years later, Harry said *“Four years after my retirement, when Mabel was finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the foothills terrain, we [decided to] move to Victor Harbor.”*

In 1981 Harry and Mabel realized their ambition to retire to the seaside. No.4 Nilpinna Street was sold. On 30th January they put down a deposit on their new home, purchased through the real estate agent Peter Burns (Victor) Pty. Ltd, at Lot 20 (No.18) Petrel Avenue Victor Harbor. Just one block back from the foreshore at Yilki, the two-storey house had good sea views from the balcony. The house attracted the Bakers because of its big garden, quiet location and proximity to the beach. Settlement on the \$59,500 property was on 31st March 1981.

Previous owners had enclosed the steel-frame construction with Hardiplank cladding to make a cosy ground-floor storey. They thought the self-contained upstairs flat would be ideal for their grandchildren to visit - Pam and Kevin's Jodie, Katherine and their coming new baby, and John and Wendy's Mark and Valerie.

Neither Frank nor Andrew had children of their own, but Frank always took a keen interest in his nieces and nephews and Andrew and Annette have played a huge role in their lives. As well as other assistance, Andy loaned and repaired cars, gave driving lessons, and shared his mechanical and electronic knowledge and practical help, while Annette gave music lessons, musical instruments and shared her love of the arts, science and maths. They have generously continued to give this help to the next generation. In the 1990's they also gave “safe house” in Adelaide to the Baker children, accommodating firstly Mark as he underwent his apprenticeship as a chef, and later Valerie during her Year 12 studies at Brighton High School and then while she undertook her Arts degree at University of Adelaide.

The preparations for Harry and Mabel to move from Burnside to Victor Harbor were enormous. Accumulations of about thirty years of family life had to be sorted, cleared, cleaned and packed. Harry could hardly ever bear to get rid of anything that might possibly be useful one day. He was a careful planner but some of his plans, although put into action, were not always completed; thus there were building and garden materials to be disposed of. The whole family pitched in and some seven trailer loads of garbage went to the dump. But the small, precious family heirlooms, the “lucky mirror” and the furniture that had come to Australia with them, all found their way safely to Victor Harbor.

For the three weeks or so between the final reading of utility meters at No 4, and moving to Victor Harbor, Harry and Mabel lived with Pam and Kevin and their two girls Jodie and Katherine at their Prospect home. Pam was expecting their third baby at this stage.

Harry had never quite got around to finishing all the kitchen cupboards at No. 4, and Mabel had “made do” for a long time. But now that the house was sold, Harry – who always did the right and proper thing – spent a good deal of time during those three weeks finishing off the kitchen in the old house so that the new owners would not be inconvenienced. Mabel was, understandably, a trifle piqued!

Moving day was Wednesday 1st April 1981, perhaps not an auspicious date because Viner Removals’ van broke down and did not arrive at Petrel Avenue until after 1 pm, and then the men promptly went to lunch. Everything was finally unloaded by 5 o’clock that night.

The garden at Petrel Avenue had eucalypts, pines and many native shrubs which attracted a host of birds. A large studio room next to the garage suited Mabel’s spinning, weaving and pottery hobbies and also took the overflow of Harry’s artistic endeavours. As time went on there were always works in progress and the studio had a pungent mixture of smells of potters’ damp clay, paints and the mustiness of papers and magazines long stored. Harry used one of the small rooms upstairs as his “den”, and there he had his portable drafting table, mementoes of his E.T.S.A. career and his and Mabel’s travels.



The ground floor of the house was warm and cosy with an open fire and timber panelling. With the little Yilki general store-cum-delicatessen only a quiet walk away for provisions and Yilki’s sandy beach and warm shallow water perfect for grandchildren, life was very good.

Then Harry spent five days in hospital recovering from a hernia operation in August 1981. Perhaps he had awakened an old weakness in that area during the move. It was almost certain that the back-strain he suffered, after insisting on helping manoeuvre his large refrigerator up the stairs to the second storey, laid the foundation for a recurrent back problem for the rest of his life.

Harry and Mabel were looking forward to the birth of Pam and Kevin’s third baby and welcomed their second grandson, Christopher James Tiggemann, the youngest of their five grandchildren, on 28th October 1981. As with his cousin Mark, Chris shared Harry’s middle name.

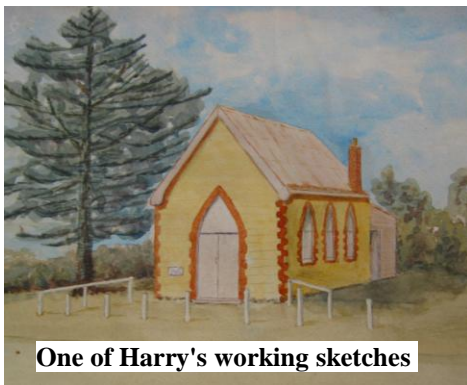
Victor Harbor was becoming increasingly popular as a place to build a holiday home and Harry and Mabel did not want their beautiful views to be built out in the event of someone buying the vacant Lot 19 next door to 18 Petrel Avenue. They also wanted to build a boat-shed. They decided to sell their Port Willunga block to help finance the purchase price of \$17,250. Lot 62 Shelley Avenue was sold on 30th October 1981 to a Canadian woman, through an agent in Port Willunga, for \$3,500. Settlement on Lot 19 Petrel Avenue was on 6th November 1981.

(Early in 2007 their old Port Willunga block was still vacant, although surrounded on three sides by homes.)

Not long after the Bakers moved to Victor Harbor, their first visitor was Steve Reid, and the next was the Reverend Bob Stewart. Evidently the Rector of St David's had sent a letter introducing them, so it was not long before they became active parishioners of St Augustine's Anglican Church in Burke Street. Harry soon found himself on the parish council. Mabel joined the South Coast Spinners and Weavers.

On Tuesday 12th January 1982, Harry was proposed into the Lodge of Peace No 89, Victor Harbor by the late John Greenwood. He was also a member of Encounter Daytime Lodge when it was formed out of deference to those who were unable to get out at night. Freemasonry was deeply important to Harry. He attended almost all rehearsals, meetings, special meetings, dinners, balls and other Lodge functions not only in Victor Harbor but also in Norwood.

Harry, already a member of the National Trust, joined the Victor Harbor branch and continued to be an enthusiastic, dedicated and valued member for the rest of his life.



and to dismantle the displays afterwards.

With Mabel's encouragement Harry started attending drawing classes on the 15th February 1982. Bill Taylor invited him to join the Southern Districts Art Society. As previously mentioned he had been quite skilled in pencil and pen and ink drawings in his youth. Under local artist Terry Lewitzka's tutelage Harry once again produced beautiful drawings. He went with the Society on frequent excursions to sketch and paint, and was a staunch helper at the many art exhibitions held along the south coast. He was always on hand to erect display panels at venues, receive and mount artworks, keep an eye on the exhibits

The Bakers took *The Advertiser* daily and Harry enjoyed the challenge of the cross-word puzzle over his after-breakfast cup of tea. His Oxford Dictionary was always at hand; he was never content to hear or see a new word without knowing its spelling and origin. Harry could spot a "typo" in an instant in the written word, perhaps a legacy of his career in inspection.

Harry had one small habit which sometimes amused people. He always carried a small set of "feeler gauges" in his pocket. These were a set of very thin, flexible metal blades of varying thicknesses, used in tool-making to accurately measure gaps between parts. Ever the engineer, Harry used them instead of toothpicks after a meal. 'Much more precise,' he said proudly. 'I have a blade to fit every gap between every tooth.'

About twelve months after his parents moved to Victor Harbor, Andrew joined the Victor Harbor Sea Rescue Squadron and was active in the Squadron for eleven years. His father-in-law had a beach shack at Middleton, which gave Andy and Annette a base for their weekend and holiday sojourns on the south coast. During the summer cray-fishing season he often set his pots

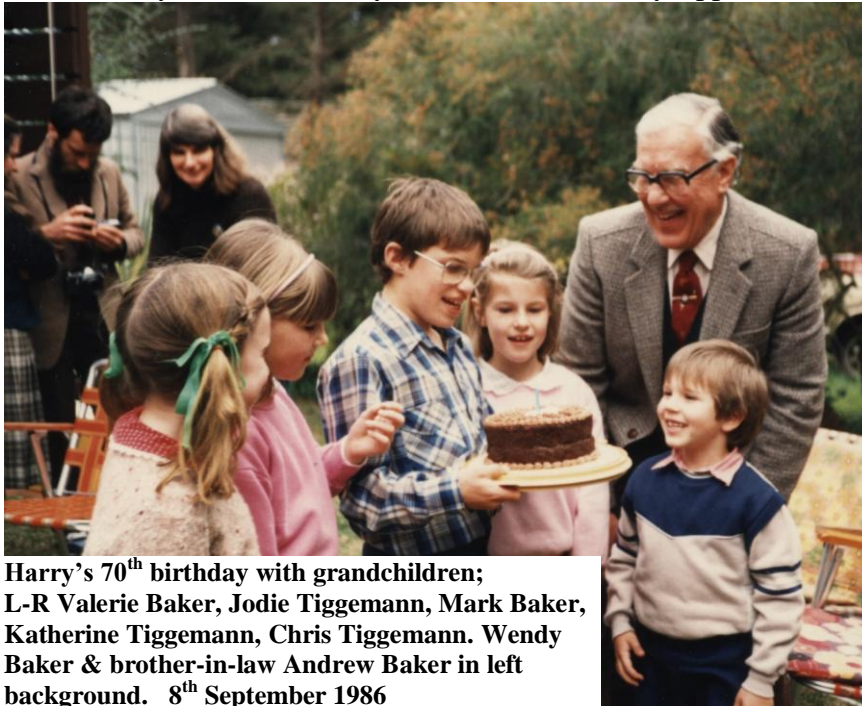
in the bay at Yilki, and he very well knew the dangers inherent in boating. Because he knew every rock, hole and reef in the bay, tidal movement and local currents, he was able to sometimes catch cray where others failed, and the Baker family enjoyed many a summer-time fresh crayfish salad.

Sometimes Andrew took Harry and Mabel out in his Hamilton jet-drive boat on fishing expeditions further afield.

Andy was also a Rear-commodore of the Victor Harbor Yacht Club at one stage. Harry had passed on his strong sense of community to his sons –Andrew and John had both been members of their respective local Country Fire Services, at Burnside and Mylor, and in later years Frank was an RSL member and fund-raiser for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. John was also active in the Yacht Club, taking on the duties of Bar Manager and in 1984/85, club Treasurer.

Mabel was six years older than Harry and health-wise, this began to tell. In June 1982 she haemorrhaged and went to hospital for tests and rest a few days later. She had been almost 34 when her first baby was born; her last child, Andrew, was born when she was 45 years old. Scant medical attention at her first birth during a German air-raid, the successive births of Frank, Pam and Andrew and an intervening miscarriage of twins, could all have contributed to the strain on her health, but she was not one to complain of any discomfort.

Mabel always had the family and extended family uppermost in her mind and she and Harry



Harry's 70th birthday with grandchildren; L-R Valerie Baker, Jodie Tiggemann, Mark Baker, Katherine Tiggemann, Chris Tiggemann. Wendy Baker & brother-in-law Andrew Baker in left background. 8th September 1986

welcomed a steady trickle of family visitors from overseas. In September 1982 her cousin Pat Cook came to stay for a month. (Harry's cousin Joyce Sykes had stayed for three weeks early in 1981 when they were still at Burnside). With four children and now five grandchildren, there was a constant round of birthday celebrations, which the Bakers loved.

"Family First" was always the Bakers' motto and while not living in each other's pockets,

celebrations of every event and achievement were always the order of the day. Anniversaries, birthdays, and particularly Christmas gave many opportunities for big family get-togethers. Mabel would always say, "Now dears, we must *do* something," and suit action to word with a family party, barbecue or meal out.

In retirement Harry was able to enjoy looking after his grandchildren at times in their own homes, and had them to stay with him and Mabel on occasion. They attended most of their grandchildren's special school, sporting, church and musical events. Harry regretted that he had not had as much time as he wished to do this for his own children, during his E.T.S.A. career.

In 1982 the Baker's eldest son John and his wife Wendy, together with children Mark and Valerie, left their 6½ acre rural property "Bimbimbi" at Mylor. They moved to 53 Ozone Street, Victor Harbor for new employment opportunities and to be closer to Harry and Mabel, on 21st August 1982.

The help so freely given in previous years flowed back to Harry and Mabel from their family. In November 1982 work was begun on replacing the old front fence at Petrel Avenue. Pam and Kevin came one Saturday and Andy and John pulled out the old fence-posts with the winch on the front of Andy's Landrover, and Kevin helped put the new ones in.

A lot happened in 1983 – a mix of sad, worrying and happy events. It was a happy day when Kathleen, daughter of John Soole and his late wife Kay, married John Edwards at 4 o'clock on Saturday 8th January, with a reception at the "Feathers" hotel, Burnside.

Unfortunately, Frank Baker's ten-year marriage to Barbara had broken up and they were divorced on 22 January 1983.

At the end of January Mabel, who had been on medication for a while, was taken to the South Coast District Hospital with a heart attack. She spent some time in Intensive Care, in a very bad way. The second night, one of her close friends was rushed in and the monitor was taken from Mabel to be used by the new patient whose condition was critical, and Mabel witnessed his death. This was the turning point in her previously spasmodic attempts to give up smoking. She never touched another cigarette. Mabel was allowed home on the 3rd February with the proviso that Harry nurse her.

"Ash Wednesday", 16th February 1983, was a disastrous day of bushfires throughout the Adelaide Hills. It was a dramatic and terrifying time and the media exploited the news to the full. Convinced that every part of South Australia was burning, relatives from New Zealand and England telephoned to see if the Bakers were safe. Victor Harbor was unscathed. Harry's son John donned his Mylor Country Fire Service uniform and hitched rides back to his old home town to assist his brigade unit as an emergency volunteer fire-fighter.

On 18th August 1983 Harry and John went to Adelaide to buy the timber for a dinghy which John had designed and was now ready to build. This was a project long dreamed of by John and encouraged by both his parents. Harry had spent much of his youth "messaging about in boats" and he loved design and construction in any medium.



Harry and Mabel's 40th wedding anniversary on 11 September 1983 was celebrated on the day by the entire family at a Hotel Victor luncheon. This was a worthy occasion for a wonderful get-together.

Harry and Mabel managed to attend most of their five grandchildren's many and varied school, church and extra-curricular functions. They were somewhat proud of young Mark and Valerie Baker at their Victor Harbor Primary School fete in October of that year. Harry noted – in his usual spare style – "*Mark – milk carton. Valerie – a fairy (certificate)*". His grandchildren were devoted to Harry, and they loved and respected their Grandpa.

1984 saw Harry's eldest son John's 40th birthday, and in August of that year the Bakers celebrated the 36th anniversary of their arrival in South Australia, at the Apollon Motel in Victor. Harry's cousin Joyce Sykes (by now resident in New Zealand) arrived in early November for a 3 week holiday.

On Saturday 24th November 1984 Harry, Mabel and Andrew helped John and Wendy launch the dinghy begun fifteen months earlier. Harry had helped his son with advice and some practical assistance during its construction. Harry and Mabel were delighted to be taken on *Snapper Tom*'s "maiden voyage" in the bay at Yilki with John at the oars. At that time John and Wendy had a cat whose favourite brand of tinned food was "Snappy Tom" – Wendy named the flattie in optimistic expectation of John catching fish for the cat.



Andrew had supplied the "Telecom Gold" paint, which had a superb high-gloss durable finish with the appearance of fibreglass – ideal to take the knocks of a dinghy moored at sea. As Andy worked for Telecom he was able to buy, through the internal system, a 450 litre job-lot of iconic rich yellow-gold paint when it was found that one batch, supposed to be lead-free, had been inadvertently manufactured with lead in the pigment. As it had to be disposed of quickly it was quite a bargain!

By now Pam and Kevin, with three young children and the demands of their growing office-machine company Total Business Equipment, felt that it was time to move to the newer residential development at West Lakes. They signed a contract in January 1985 on a water-front home, subject to the sale of 18 Graham Place, Prospect, with a 60-day settlement. The Prospect

house had had extensive renovations, costing some \$18,000, to cope with the expanding family. It sold at auction on 28th March 1985; exactly eight years to the day since they had bought it. Purchase of the house at 9 Keppel Grove, on Delfin Island at West Lakes, was finalized the same day.

Harry and Mabel were delighted with his daughter and son-in-law's new home and enjoyed many visits there. They took every opportunity they could to spend time with their daughter, sons and grandchildren, and arranged any medical appointments or shopping expeditions in the city to coincide with family visits.

Harry did not have as much contact with his half-brother Jack Soole as with the rest of the family, although Jack and Helen visited Petrel Avenue quite often and vice-versa. When Jack had a heart bypass operation in late April 1985, Harry visited him in the Royal Adelaide Hospital and took the opportunity to stay at Pam and Kevin's home overnight. Jack retired from the RSPCA on 17th July, 1985 and he and Helen went to live at Hackham for a number of years until they moved to a unit in Goodwood.

Harry continued his interest in artwork and in May of 1985 he acquired another small painting, *Rain Forest* by Van der Herst, from one of the local art exhibitions. In all, Harry's collection of artworks – both his own work and his and Mabel's purchases - amounted to some 52 paintings and drawings.

Mabel and Harry were keen for their grandchildren to share their love of fishing. They had a wonderful day at the end of May in 1985 with ten year old Mark and eight year old Valerie at the local Tooperang Trout Farm, where they were all guaranteed good catches!

In the back yard of Petrel Avenue was an old fowl-house complete with an automatic water trough, but Harry's interests did not extend to keeping chickens. However, in 1985 John and Wendy built a chook-house, and Harry helped dismantle the water trough so that John could install it at Ozone Street.



Harry supervising boatshed building

The Bakers loved travelling and on Saturday 12 October 1985 they left by coach from Adelaide to go to Arkaroola. They returned eight days later with a lovely collection of photographs and memories – material for Harry's artistic talents.

Early in 1986, construction of the boatshed on the adjoining block was begun, with John - and Harry's grandson Mark - providing a good deal of the muscle-work. Andy and Frank helped when they could, but they

lived further afield in Adelaide. First, trees on the western boundary were lopped, then in February the framework was erected and footings poured. The floor of the Baker's boatshed at 18 Petrel Avenue was poured on 2nd June. Harry and Mabel acquired this large block of land on the western boundary of number 18 after they sold the Port Willunga block mentioned earlier.

As well as the fibreglass dinghy, Harry and Mabel had a ten foot aluminium dinghy which they used for netting and gar-dabbing on an occasional crystal clear, warm, dead-calm summer night, gliding through the still black water that exactly mirrored the bay-side lights. Garfish, lured to the surface, were easily caught in the dab-nets.

That summer Peggy Hart (nee Carr) came from England to visit the "Antipodean cousins" and their families. Harry and Mabel took Harry's cousin to visit Pam and Kevin on the hottest March day for 43 years – 41 degrees or 108 F. Peg's collapse in the heat, and subsequent ambulance trip to Flinders Medical Centre was well noted in Harry's diary. Fortunately she made a rapid recovery. A barbecue for the whole family was held at Pam and Kevin's a fortnight later, and the Bakers took Peg via Christies Beach to Urimbirra on their return from Pam's the following day.



Harry Baker, Peg Hart, Jack Soole, 1986

At that time the Victor Harbor Trotting Club raced on its old track behind the South Coast District Hospital. While driving past one day during her visit, John made a comment to her about "going to the trots".

'Goodness me!' she said in alarm. 'Do you have those dreadful people here too?'

She thought we had meant "Trots" as a short form of "Trotskyites". Peggy was relieved by our explanation of the Australian colloquial term for square-gait harness racing.

Peg went home on the 4th April, leaving the whole family with memories of a lovely lady.

Harry noted in his diary that "*fourteen of us*" celebrated Mother's Day in May 1986 with lunch at the Hotel Victor. His son Andrew recalled his father always keeping a diary, noting all his appointments as well as family birthdays and important occasions, although he never kept a "journal" as such. Unfortunately, only diaries dated from 1981 until 2003 have been found, but these were invaluable in helping to put together Harry's story over that period.

Also during May, John and Wendy bought an old double-ended lifeboat named the *Tardis*. Harry and Mabel spent a happy day at Goolwa, where *Tardis* was moored in "Chippy" Barclay's Marina on Liverpool Road. That day they also enjoyed encouraging Mark who was making his first attempt to sail a catamaran during a school aquatics programme.

By now Jodie was starting Year 3 at school; she and Katherine had both started their schooling at St Andrews in Walkerville, but they now moved to St Peters' Girls in Stonyfell, as had their mother Pam before them.

As an adult, reflecting on childhood time spent with Grandpa and Grandma Baker, Jodie wrote *'I remember, especially Easter times Dad, Mum and us kids going to Victor and staying upstairs. I remember the Easter egg hunt in the morning after the "Easter Bunny" had delivered our eggs. One time when we were staying there, I don't know what I had done, but I was in trouble with Mum and Dad. I went to run out onto the top balcony. I didn't realize the screen door was closed and I ran straight through it, knocking the door out of the frame and off the balcony. I can remember Grandpa not being very happy with me!'*

Harry and Mabel put aside some of their commitments on the weekend of 21st and 22nd November 1986 so that they could support Mark and Valerie in their activities; a gymnastics display by the youth club in the Community Recreation Hall and a Calisthenics Display at the Victor Harbor Town Hall.

For a while now Frank had been dating Penny Whitwell and they announced their engagement on 16th July 1986. They married on 13th December 1986 at 11.30 am at 18 Petrel Avenue, in the garden with its elegant archway and candle-pines. The whole family was present to witness the service by celebrant Colin Creek and watch the happy couple drive off in one of noted local Lindsay Dent's lovely horse-drawn carriages, prior to the reception.

On 1st January 1987, Harry recorded that it was the 8th anniversary of his mother's death. A few days later Mick Rowlands, rang from England to say that his wife (Mabel's cousin) Win's condition was deteriorating rapidly, in London Hospital. The next day a letter came from Peg to say that her sister Daisy Pope (nee Carr) had passed away a week before Christmas. Daisy and her husband Bill were well-known to the Australian branch of the family as they had visited South Australia in the mid-1970's. It seemed to Harry and Mabel that the old family was falling apart.

In life's usual way, these sad times were relieved by happier events. Wendy's old pen-friend Levinia Potton-Jones and her daughter Julie visited John and Wendy for a few days in early April, and made a brief return visit to Harry and Mabel. (During their 1976 New Zealand holiday, Harry and Mabel had stayed with Levinia and her husband for a short time.) A few days later Pam and Kevin Tiggemann went to Bali for a week's holiday they had won in a business competition, and young son Christopher was delighted to stay with his Baker grandparents during that week.

Chris recalled that the Tiggemann children's visits to Harry and Mabel were mostly confined to Easter, Christmas and birthdays, with sometimes *"the odd stay upstairs at Encounter Bay. I remember lots of fun there – the Bluff, Andy's boat, the giant front garden at Petrel Avenue, but most of all the house – downstairs for TV and meals and upstairs for fun and holidays."*



Harry & Mabel in fancy dress

In June 1987 Mabel finally had a hysterectomy after years of suffering bouts of haemorrhaging and minor hospitalization for curettes. She was allowed home after eight days, provided that Harry was prepared to change dressings and nurse her. Two months later he took her for a week's cruise up the Murray on the *P.S. Murray River Queen*, a wonderfully relaxing time for both of them. They both hammed it up in costume on Fancy Dress Night, Harry appearing as "How Hi".

During the latter part of 1987 Mabel and Harry were upset by Mick Rowland's situation in England. Win had died and Mick's sight was failing; he had surgery in March 1988 and again in early May, at North Middlesex Hospital. The Bakers had stayed with the Rowlands for part of their 1975 trip to the U.K. and were close to them.

On Wednesday 13th April 1988, John and Wendy went to Japan for a short holiday.. John had been studying Japanese language for twelve months after a wrist injury left him unable to work full time. Harry and Mabel welcomed Mark, aged 12, to stay with them until John and Wendy's return on the 23rd April, and saw them off at the airport at lunchtime. 10-year-old Valerie stayed with Wendy's parents in the city.

Harry and Mabel received a letter from cousin Peg Hart in December 1988 to say that Pat Patrick, Phyl's husband, had finally had a kidney transplant on the 5th December. She said that Phyl, another of Harry's cousins, was staying with her daughter and son-in-law, Kath and Colin Vicker, proprietors of the Queen's Head Pub, Cubbington, near Leamington, while Pat was in hospital.

Christmas Day was often celebrated at Pam and Kevin's home, first at the Prospect house and later at West Lakes, which was more suited to entertaining. 1988 was one of those occasions. Pam always



Harry seated at head of Christmas table at Frank & Penny's.

opened her home and her heart to the entire family and their closest friends. Somehow, she always managed to produce a sit-down full-scale English style Christmas Dinner for anything up to twenty people – some years, when Kevin’s relatives from Kangaroo Island were able to come, there were more.

The family contributed to the magnificent spread but it was Pam who would be up till all hours for days before, organizing food and gifts. In an echo of the family Christmases at Nilpinna Street Burnside, after Pam and Kevin’s Christmas dinners Harry sometimes presided over the distribution of gifts from the enormous pile around the Christmas tree. The grandchildren were also given the opportunity to play “Father Christmas”.

Sometimes Frank and Penny hosted Christmas at their Blackwood home and later at their Woodcroft house, and there too the whole “clan” gathered to celebrate. Harry was usually invited to say grace before the meal.

Andrew Baker’s brother-in-law John White married Shaheena Khan at a ceremony at 658 Marion Road, Parkholme on Saturday 28th January, 1989. John and Shaheena later moved to England where he worked as an orthopaedic surgeon.

A steady trickle of various aunts, uncles, cousins and second cousins from England travelled to visit and stay awhile with the Bakers – the Kirbys and Popes in the sixties and seventies and Phyl and Pat Patrick, Pat Cook, Joyce Sykes, Peg Hart, her son Tim Hart, and in 2001 Terry Doherty (Betty Creighton’s niece). These visits gave opportunities for Harry and Mabel to see more of Australia as they enjoyed touring the eastern states, central Australia, Flinders Ranges, the Murray, the South-East, Kangaroo Island, the West Coast, Tasmania and New Zealand.

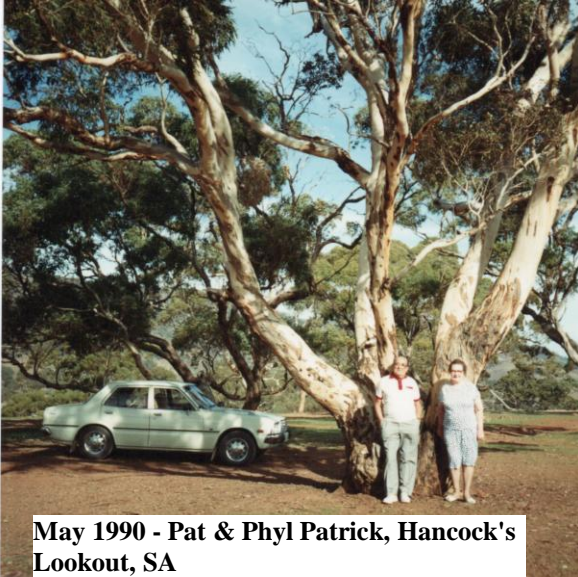
Harry was a good “record” photographer and his photos and memories fuelled his creativity for his many delightful paintings and pen and ink drawings, most of which are proudly displayed in his children’s homes. A copy of a spaniel he drew in his youth is on the inside of the front cover of a family album made for his eldest grandson Mark Baker’s thirtieth birthday.



Harry & his cousin Joyce Sykes

In March 1989 Harry finished an exquisite pencil drawing of the Station Master’s House on Flinders Parade for the National Trust. His set of four drawings was reproduced in sepia as cards for sale as a fund-raiser by the Trust. The other three drawings were of the old Telegraph Station in Coral Street, the Horse-Drawn Tram, and the old Mill at Encounter Bay.

Always keen to take on a challenge, Mabel took up French lessons in April 1989 to re-ignite what she had learned during her school-days. For Christmas of that year John and Wendy gave her a Monet print, something to represent both Harry and Mabel's interests, and it was framed, as were most of Harry's own paintings and drawings, by local Glen Irvine of Yilki Picture



Framers. Mabel had always embraced new interests with enthusiasm, whether it was pottery, home-spun wool, knitting, dress-making, weaving, fishing or gardening. She was also an avid reader. Mabel had inherited great strength of character from her Creighton forebears, and this balanced Harry's slower, deliberate ways of methodical thought and action.

In January 1990, Mabel tripped over the kerb outside the Southern Nursing Home, Victor Harbor, opposite Clifton Guesthouse (both buildings now demolished). Apart from some bruising, she appeared unhurt. Then on the 5th March, Pat and Phyl Patrick (nee Carr) arrived

from England via Singapore to stay with Harry and Mabel for nearly two months. Because of his kidney problems, Pat had had to get medical clearance from his doctors before the trip. They had all been looking forward to this trip for over a year.

Early in May 1990, the Bakers and the Patricks went to Wilpena Pound via Clare and Hawker. Cousin Phyl and her husband enjoyed a flight over the Pound, as did Harry and Mabel. On their way back to Victor Harbor they visited the Riverland and stayed in the Renmark Motel-Hotel. Unfortunately, Mabel fell in the bathroom and hurt her shoulder. Phyl and Pat had to return to England on 18th May.

Within a month, Mabel was unwell and shaking and spent a few days in Memorial Hospital, North Adelaide, where the doctor injected cortisone in her right shoulder. She was in bed at home for Harry's birthday in September, and although the family members came to wish him birthday greetings, there was no grand celebration. Their 47th wedding anniversary passed quietly. Mabel's 80th birthday was at Petrel Avenue. John and Wendy, Mark, Valerie and Jodie, Pam's eldest daughter, shared a roast pork lunch with her and Harry.

Mabel had yet another accident on 12th October of 1990, when she tripped over a power cord and fell against the dressing table, hurting her right arm. In March 1991, while Harry was at the chemist getting a repeat prescription for her, she fell just outside the back door. All these falls left her bruised and shaken.

At the end of June her doctor had her admitted to South Coast District Hospital where x-rays showed an enlarged heart. As her condition continued to deteriorate, she was given an interview by the aged care assessment panel for eligibility to enter a nursing home. In mid-July 1991

Mabel was diagnosed with pulmonary adenoma and the Anglican minister, Alan Lewis, gave her absolution. She also had Parkinson's disease, which was responsible for her many falls, unsteadiness and shaking episodes. Harry reluctantly put her name on the waiting list at the Victor Harbor Nursing Home.

In spite of his sadness and anxiety about Mabel's health, Harry celebrated his daughter's 40th birthday at a Chinese restaurant in Adelaide, travelling in John's car. With so much on his mind, Harry was glad not to have to drive.

Mabel was admitted to the Victor Harbor Nursing Home on 26th August, a sad event, but at the same time a relief for the family to know that she was as safe as possible.

On 1st September, Pam and her family came to Victor Harbor for Dedication, Confirmation and Communion at St Augustine's, and to visit Mabel. John and Helen Soole came to see Mabel on the 11th September and to lunch with Harry on his 48th wedding anniversary.

Mabel turned 81 on Tuesday 24th September. Harry arranged an afternoon tea party with a birthday cake. John, Wendy, Mark and Valerie came in at 4.30 and Valerie played "Happy Birthday" and some other old tunes on the electric organ in the nursing home's lounge. Three days later, Harry received a call from the Home at 6.20 am to go and be with Mabel. She passed away at 5 pm on Friday 27th September 1991.

Mabel's funeral was at 2 pm on Tuesday 1st October, at St Augustine's. Unwilling to leave Harry to bear his loss alone, John, Wendy and the children moved into the upstairs flat at Petrel Avenue for a short time over the school holidays. Harry kept his grief private and gradually moved back into the activities and community duties which he had been unable to perform during Mabel's illness.



Harry at son Frank's home. Dressed ready for a Lodge meeting.

Chapter 5 – The Passing Years

Harry continued to live at Petrel Avenue for several years, caring for himself, house and garden with the same perfection he had always practised. He enjoyed a dry sherry before dinner (in a stemmed glass, with ice) and a cup of tea afterwards. When Mabel was alive, Wendy had helped with the weekly cleaning, but now in spite of help offered, Harry insisted on doing his own house cleaning, washing, ironing and gardening. It was a matter of pride to Harry that he could be independent.

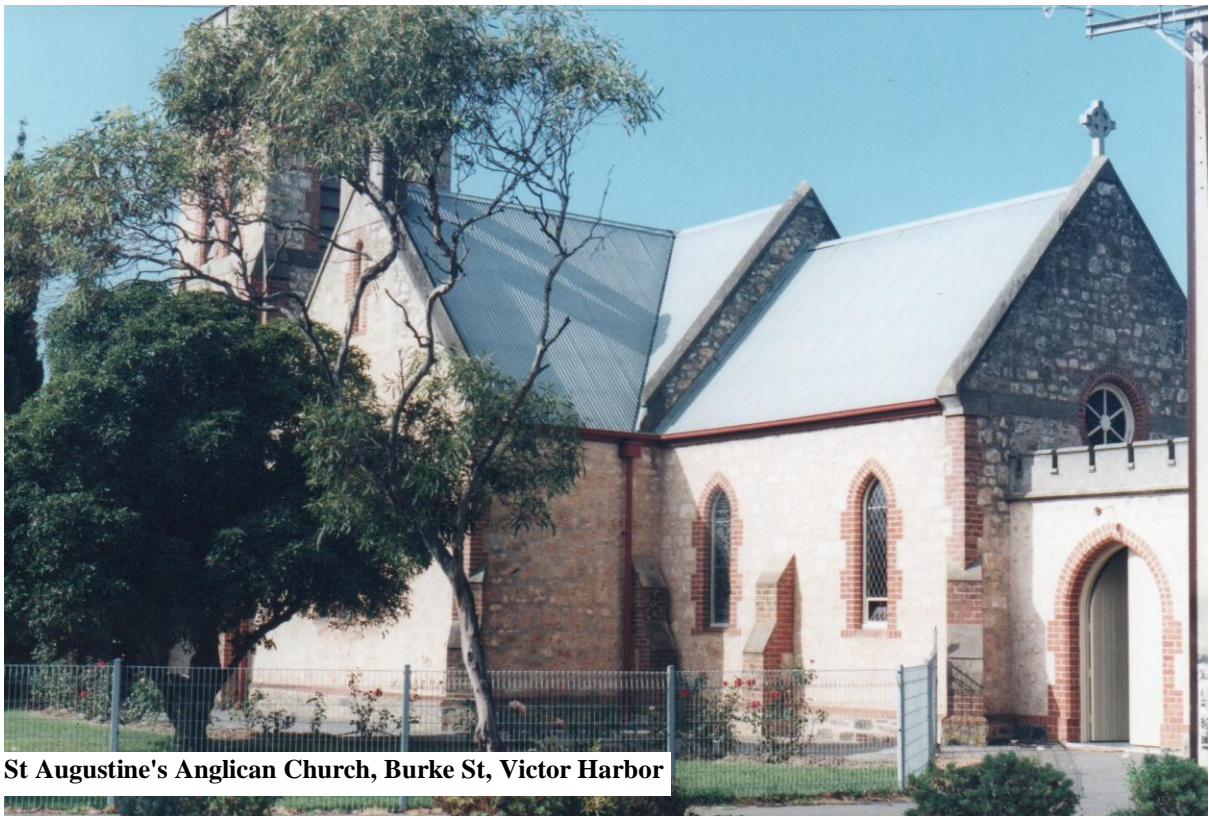
People often commented on how impeccably Harry dressed. He looked quite handsome when dressed in his black suit and bow tie, with silvering hair, ready for Lodge meetings. He was known to most of Victor

Harbor by his “signature” dark navy beret which he almost always wore. He was the quintessential English gentleman in manner and dress, both in public and at home.

Harry had a link with his son-in-law Kevin in that both he and Kevin had “found” and embraced Christianity as adults and at similar ages and dates. Kevin, who had been baptized earlier in 1991, was confirmed on 7th October 1991, at the age of 38, in Holy Trinity church, Adelaide. Harry had been confirmed on 30th October 1951, at the age of 35.

Christmas 1991 was an emotional time for Harry, but he went with John and Wendy to spend Christmas Day at Frank and Penny’s with all the family, and visited Wendy’s parents Pearl and Bill Clark in the late afternoon with her and John, on their way home to Victor Harbor.

On New Year’s Day 1992, Mr. and Mrs. Seiji and Yukiko Shinada, John and Wendy’s Japanese friends, came to visit and Harry generously agreed to them staying upstairs at Petrel Avenue. They were the parents of Kaoru Taki, a volunteer assistant Japanese language teacher for twelve months at Glendale Christian School, then a small private school in Victor Harbor opposite the high school. The Shinada family left again on 6th January, but the friendship continued; they never forgot Harry’s hospitality and every year at Christmas sent him a card and a beautiful calendar.



The church community of St Augustine’s was a great comfort to Harry after Mabel’s death. He had previously joined the church choir at Jack Young’s invitation but after its disbandment, he was asked by Iris Dutton to join the Singing Group. He set out the parish magazine “*Encounter*” in street formation, helped with writing name labels, readings and intercessions as

rostered, and with various minor (and sometimes not so minor) maintenance tasks. In his early days at Victor Harbor he was instrumental in the design of renovations to the church porch.

Harry supported the local Liberal Party branch and as well as handing out how-to-vote cards he gave his services as a scrutineer after voting closed on election days. He counted himself a personal friend of Dean Brown, and Harry and Mabel had in the past sometimes dined with Dean and his wife.



The late Cynthia Rymill, a prominent local citizen after whom a wing of the South Coast District Hospital was named, invited Harry to join Telecross and Neighbours-in-Action. His diaries record many trips to Adelaide with clients of the latter group, transporting people to medical appointments in city and suburbs, often having to leave Victor very early in the morning. Quite often on his return he would then continue straight to a National Trust committee meeting or a Masonic meeting, or any other of his many commitments.

Telecross duties involved his being up bright and early to man the telephone call system by 8 am, ringing sick or elderly people identified as "at risk" and being prepared to notify the appropriate authority promptly if a call went unanswered.

Harry's calligraphy skills were always in demand; he wrote name badges for St Augustine's parishioners, and signs and notices for the National Trust and other organizations of which he was a member. Birthday, Christmas and Easter cards from "Grandpa Baker" were valued by his

children and grandchildren, for he inscribed his sincere messages with great care in a distinctive calligraphic style.

In 1993 Harry was involved in a heritage project to remove the old St Thomas's church from its site at Inman Valley to the



Harry's drawing (base of cairn) of St Thomas's church at the unveiling of the memorial, 2 May 1993

new Yankalilla Historical Society Museum. He made a beautiful, accurate pencil drawing of the little church and was present on 2nd May for the unveiling of the plaque marking its original site. He also attended the opening on 17th May of the Museum at Yankalilla. His original drawing of the church hangs in the St Thomas Chapel at St Augustine's, Burke Street Victor Harbor.

Tim Hart, Peg Hart's son, visited from 13th July to 12th August of 1993, staying mostly with Harry at Petrel Avenue, but Tim also visited and stayed with others in the family.

Harry had a happy knack of winning raffle prizes and he was particularly pleased to win a large painting of the outback by Mick O'Shea at the Norwood Football Club, at a dinner with the Tiggemanns on August 27th.

A couple of months after his 77th birthday, celebrated with a lunch at John and Wendy's, Harry spent a week touring Tasmania with his cousin Joyce from New Zealand. Always active, he sandwiched this trip between grand-daughter Jodie's confirmation at Holy Trinity, North Terrace, Adelaide on the evening of 3rd October 1993 and grandson Mark's 18th birthday barbecue in November at John and Wendy's. His confirmation gift to Jodie was a beautiful prayer book which she has always treasured.

Jodie and Katherine had both by this time moved from St Peters' Girls to Temple College in Mile End. Jodie completed Years 10 and 11 at Temple College before commencing study with Adelaide Legal & Commercial College.

Harry always adored good food and more and more in the 1990's he patronised local cafes such as Pa's Place at Yilki, next to the general store overlooking Encounter Bay. He sometimes ate at these establishments but more often he took good quality meals back home so that he could enjoy his pre-dinner sherry and "keep the standards", to quote him. His favourite hotel was the historic Grosvenor on the corner of Ocean and Coral Streets in Victor Harbor, and family celebrations were often held there.

Whenever possible he spent two evenings a week at John and Wendy's, joining them for the evening meal followed by his favourite T.V. program *The Bill*. He also loved some of the old BBC sit-com re-runs, *Dad's Army*, *It Ain't Half 'ot Mum*, and *Some Mothers Do 'ave 'em*. He aimed to arrive, in his pale-green Toyota Corolla, at 6 p.m., although he rarely made it exactly on time. Harry always dressed neatly. In winter he wore corduroy trousers, shirt, cardigan and either sports jacket or overcoat, a tie with his ETSA tie-bar, and his navy blue beret. In warmer weather he wore light-weight trousers and long-sleeved shirt and tie. It was only when it was very hot that he did not wear his beret.

When he went to John and Wendy's for the evening, Harry used to get out of his car and carry the plastic bag containing a cask of moselle wine in one hand, and in the other, a bottle of soft drink and a purchased frozen dessert, his contributions to the meal. If John offered to take the bags, knowing that his father suffered from back pain, Harry the engineer always politely refused, saying 'No thank you, I can manage. I'm balanced, you see.'

Frank and Penny welcomed him to their housewarming barbecue early in April 1994, at their Blackwood home. The 9th May was another occasion for a celebration – Harry’s 62nd anniversary of starting work!

On 10th June, Pam had a hysterectomy at Burnside War Memorial Hospital. It was about this time that Harry finally decided to have an odd-job man do the heavy gardening for him at Petrel Avenue. Raucous, destructive black cockatoos constantly tore down green pine cones and scattered a mess of dead pine needles on the sloping driveway. Harry also detested the constant swirl of fallen leaves from the many gum trees. His continual efforts to rake the leaves and sweep the driveway gave him constant back pain.



Harry with John, Pam & Kevin on eve of trip to UK.

The whole family gathered at Petrel Avenue on 18th June 1994 to celebrate John’s 50th birthday with a roast pork dinner in the upstairs flat. Harry was looking forward, although with some trepidation, to a trip to England with Pam and Kevin. They left on 1st August and returned on the 29th. He enjoyed the trip, which passed without incident, and which let him catch up once again with his cousins, his childhood friend Brenda (nee Hibbs) and other relatives.

Harry had never really stopped quietly grieving for his beloved Mabel and was unable to bring himself to deal with her personal effects until three years after her death. Pam, together with Frank’s wife Penny, did this task for him one day in October 1994.

His little blue ETSA Credit Union diary was always crowded with appointments. At the same time as the National Trust talked of raising the old *Solway* anchor and called on his expertise for this project, Harry was also involved with preparations for the launch of the Horse Tram Centenary celebrations on 27th December 1994.

Joyce Sykes again visited Harry for a week in early March, 1995, during which she participated in Valerie’s 17th birthday celebrations at Andrew and Annette’s house, and also enjoyed a whole-family “Let’s meet Joyce” barbecue at Petrel Avenue.

During these years Harry had managed to continue attending his Masonic meetings at No 32, Norwood, but a diary entry on Thursday 22 June 1995 noted “*No 32 mtg 7.15 pm – Last – handing in of warrant to Grand Lodge*”. It was a sign of the times - membership in all the Lodges was declining steadily with little interest being shown by younger men.

Although Harry and Mabel had rarely mixed with Wendy’s parents, they were always thoughtful towards that couple and when Wendy’s father Bill Clark died on 1 October that year, Harry attended his funeral.

Harry was quietly proud of his son John's business, Merlin Mechanical, begun in mid-1994 at their Victor Harbor home. He always showed his professional and family interest in their manufacture of underwater metal-detectors and waterproof electronic headphones and often called in at no. 53 Ozone Street on his way home from one of his committee meetings. He would sit quietly in the workshop, enjoy a cup of tea and chat, and "inspect" work in progress.

In the lead-up to Christmas Harry enjoyed the presentation of the 18th Annual Festival of Lessons and Carols at St Peter's Cathedral, in which Valerie, as a Year 12 student at Brighton Secondary School Music Centre, sang soprano. Christmas Day 1995 was spent at Pam and Kevin's home at West Lakes and on New Year's Eve Harry went to John and Wendy's for tea, after which they took him to the Warland Reserve celebrations and fireworks to see in the new year of 1996.



Harry Baker on his 80th birthday

In 1996, Valerie Baker's first year at the University of Adelaide, she joined the Adelaide University Choral Society. Always supportive of his grandchildren, on 14th September Harry went to the 1996 Hymnfest in St Peter's cathedral, in which the Choral Society participated along with St Peter's Cathedral and Pilgrim Church choirs.

1996 was also the year of his 80th birthday celebration held in St Augustine's church hall at Victor Harbor. Almost 100 family and friends attended - a measure of the love, respect and esteem in which he was held. Joyce Sykes came from New Zealand especially for the event.



Harry and Jack at Harry's 80th

A couple of months later, Harry went to Pam and Kevin's with Frank and Penny for Jodie Tiggemann's party to mark her engagement to David Harris. Jodie had been going out with Dave, whom she met through church as a young teenager, for several years. She had almost completed her studies at Adelaide Legal & Commercial College but obtained a full time job at Gunn & Davey Barristers & Solicitors when just 17. She continued to work for this firm until her marriage in 1997.

Harry attended Mark's 21st birthday party, held in Adelaide at the Richmond Chinese Restaurant only a week after Jodie and Dave's engagement, and then on Mark's birthday, 27th November, Harry took Mark's parents John and Wendy to dinner at the Whaler's Inn to mark the actual date.

John gave his father an open ticket for a cruise on the *P.S. Mundoo*, at Goolwa, for Christmas 1996, a trip which Harry took with John and Wendy a couple of months later in February. On 13th August 1997, Harry was proud witness to Pam and Kevin Tiggemann's official opening of their new business premises at Norwood for Total Business Equipment.

Jodie and Dave married on 1st November 1997, and after a two week New Zealand honeymoon the Tiggemann's held a welcome-home party for them attended by Harry with John and Wendy. The newly-weds then moved to Perth, where Jodie worked at Chesterton International, a real estate company, for nearly two years before she started working with Dave full-time in business administration within the Cobra Group of companies, including Dave's company.

Just after Jodie's wedding Harry received a letter from Elderly Citizens Homes Inc regarding his possible entry to an Independent Living Unit. He and Mabel had put their names on the waiting list many years previously. Now, however, he felt reluctant to make any move, as he still felt able to manage living by himself.

Early in 1998 his grand-daughter Valerie went to England. She stayed first with her Uncle Andrew's relatives in London – his brother-in-law John White, his wife Shaheena and their three daughters. She then stayed with Harry's cousin Peg Hart in Northampton for a few days. Although elderly and frail Peg enjoyed Val's company and she in turn was delighted with the small but comfy Council house and the quiet environment bordering the Common where squirrels scampered among the trees. Val said that she felt so much at ease there. Staying with her grandfather's cousin gave a tangible link to the family past.

Peggy was devoted to her little old Jack Russell terrier Buttons, then thirteen years old. Peggy's son Tim owned a narrow-boat on a canal at Oxford. Val had a memorable day cruising with Tim. 'It seemed just so perfectly *English*,' she said. 'A coldness that numbed my face; my breath coming in little white puffs as the canal-boat glided along, and me sipping on ginger ale from an old teacup with a drop of something warming in it!'

Valerie's mother Wendy flew to Greece to meet her daughter on the way home, so that they could together tour the ancient historical sites Val had studied in Classics at university. Not long after their return, Valerie's boyfriend Graeme Bubner proposed marriage and Harry was delighted to celebrate with the family at the young couple's engagement party at John and Wendy's on 22nd March 1998.

Harry was very concerned at this time about the steady decline in membership of the Lodge of Peace No 89, due to illness and death of his fellow Masons, and at least one special meeting was called to discuss the future of the Victor Harbor institution.



Harry, ever the inspector, checking progress on anchor installation

Harry shared a quiet dinner with John and Wendy at the Anchorage in August 1998 to mark the 50th anniversary of his and Mabel's arrival in South Australia. In the same month he was under a lot of strain helping design and organize the installation of a plinth for the anchor, believed to be from the old *Solway*, outside the Interpretive Centre at the National Trust Museum. He spent many evenings with John and Wendy, discussing some of

his concerns.

In September 1998 Harry was again offered an independent living unit in the ECH complex in Hill Court, Victor Harbor. Harry reluctantly ceded to age, health, and the enormity of trying to independently maintain a two-storey house, garage, workshop, studio and garden spread over two large blocks of land. He decided, however, to delay a final decision until after a planned October trip to Perth with Pam and Kevin to visit his grand-daughter Jodie and her husband Dave in Perth.

Chapter 6 – A Full and Interesting Life

20 - The Times, Thursday, February 4, 1999

propertynews
REAL ESTATE FEATURE

Double treed allotment

Around the corner and you are on the beach at beautiful Encounter Bay.

Set on a pretty treed double allotment of 1810m² is this two storey residence comprised of two self contained living areas.

Ground floor has a large lounge/dine with a combustion heater, two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, separate toilet and laundry.

Top level has a large wide balcony, an open living area with gas heating, kitchenette, 3 bedrooms, bathroom and toilet.

There is also an external studio/games room combining with garaging.

The adjoining allotment, which is on a separate title, has a double garage with concrete floor and ETSA.

Priced at \$149,000, the home can be viewed through the selling agents Elders Real Estate Victor Harbor by phoning 8552 1422 or after hours Peter Gregory on 8552 3078.

After his return from Perth, Harry signed a contract with Elderly Citizens' Homes Inc on 27th October, 1998 and put 18 Petrel Avenue up for sale. It was a decision made in heartache because he had always been such a proudly independent person.

Moving day was Friday 18th December, 1998 and settlement on Petrel Avenue was on Monday 29th March, 1999, two days after Valerie and Graeme's wedding. In the intervening three months was a hectic period of sorting - with family help - a lifetime's accumulation of historic personal treasures, over forty paintings, and

copious amounts of paperwork as well as thousands of photos to be sorted, catalogued and archived.

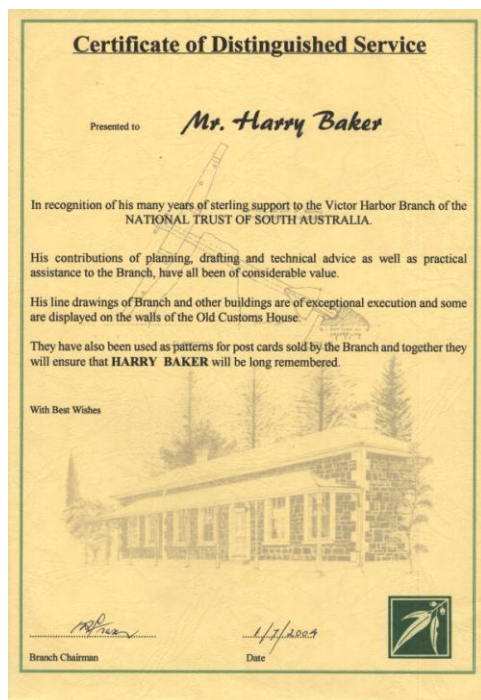
At the appropriate time the family set up a garage sale in front of the boat-shed at Petrel Avenue, and a good deal of the incidental furniture and household items was sold after Harry conferred with family members on what they might wish to take for themselves. Although the sale accomplished what it had been held for, it was a sad day for Harry.

Harry had said from the day he had first inspected it that the one-bedroom Unit 6, Hill Court was 'not big enough to swing a cat'. However, there was room for a few precious pieces of furniture such as the writing bureau he had received for his 21st birthday, the mirror that had survived three of Hitler's bomb attacks on their London house, an octagonal timber coffee table that he and Mabel had brought to Australia, most of his book collection, his portable drafting table and a dresser.

The dresser was part of a dining room suite which he and Mabel had had made many years previously, for their home at Burnside, by Smalls Ltd, for whom Bill Clark, Wendy's cabinet-maker father worked at the time. When Harry moved to Unit 6 and found the dining table and chairs too large for his unit, he gave them to his newly-wed grand-daughter Valerie and her husband, who had just moved into a unit in metropolitan Daw Park.

With Harry's passion for good food he continued to enjoy sharing meals with his family at local eating icons in Victor Harbor, including the Grosvenor Hotel, the Hotel Victor and sometimes the Crown. One of his favourite spots further afield in Adelaide CBD was the old Directors Hotel, where many a hearty meal was enjoyed with Pam and Kevin and other family members.

At the end of June 1999, Harry's son-in-law Kevin Tiggemann was inducted as President of the Kidman Park Rotary Club, for the customary one-year term, in a ceremony at the Football Park Convention Centre, and in September Harry joined in grand-daughter Jodie's 21st birthday celebrations.



Harry was a member of the Masonic Foundation, the charitable arm of the Freemasons. As Lodge Co-ordinator of the Lodge of Peace, in early 2000 he took part in the presentation of a sizeable donation to the Southern Fleurieu Health Service to enable maintenance of the alarm system at Railway Cottage, opposite the railway station, which provides care for people affected by dementia, and respite for their carers. He was also heavily involved in the organization of Christmas hamper relief.

In early December, 2000, Harry had what he described as his own "early Christmas present". He was very thrilled to receive an Honour Award "In Recognition of

Significant Voluntary Service to the National Trust of South Australia” from the State branch of the Trust. It was their formal acknowledgement of more than twenty years’ volunteer service and dedication to Trust ideals. His unwavering commitment, supervision, leadership and technical engineering advice during the establishment of the Encounter Coast Discovery Centre, along with his artistic skills, were cited in the Victor Harbor Branch’s submission which led to his Award.



Father's Day 1999. L-R Frank, Harry, John, Andrew Baker & John's son Mark

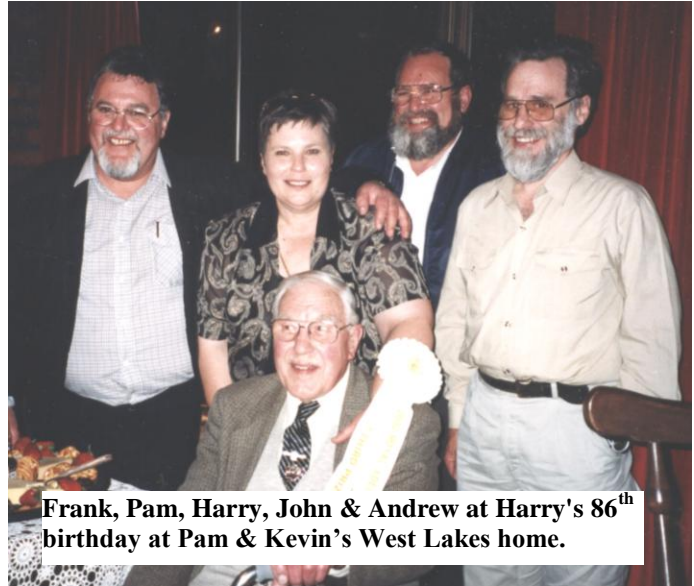
Harry enjoyed going to the Victor Cinema with John and Wendy on occasion, and memorable for him was the movie “*Titanic*” during which he told us that Stone’s, the company with which he served his apprenticeship, had made the propellers for the ship, something of note to him although he was not born until four years after her disastrous maiden voyage in 1912.

Harry had suffered back pain, what he called “sciatica”, on and off over a number of years and physiotherapy seemed to be of little help. It gradually worsened and in 2001 he underwent a laminectomy on 22nd March at Memorial Hospital in North Adelaide. From there he was taken to the South Coast Private Hospital for recuperation, and almost a month later to Kiama, a local nursing home, for further rest and recuperation. However twelve days later he was back in Memorial Hospital for a second round of surgery. On the 8th June he was transferred to S.C.P.H. and three weeks later he was taken to Griffith Rehabilitation Hospital at Brighton. After a gruelling four months Harry was finally sufficiently recovered to come back home on 10th July.

Pam’s 50th birthday on 16th August 2001 was a moment of triumph after a rigorous battle with breast cancer, a battle in which the whole family had been sworn to secrecy so that she could spare her dad the worry. As his and Mabel’s only daughter, she was very special to him. He had sometimes commented that she looked “poorly” but she managed to convince him that things had been hectic in the business and that she was merely tired.

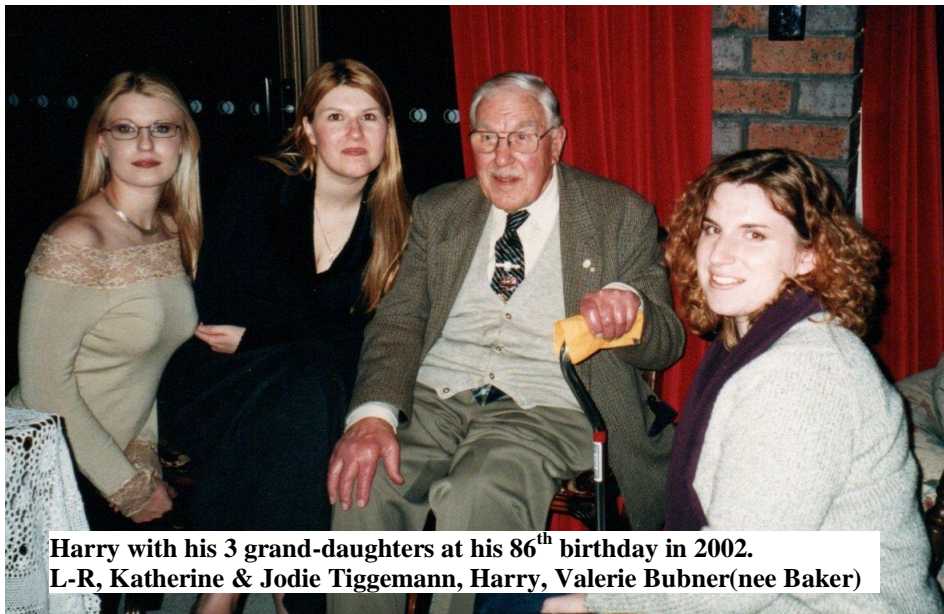
After his return from all his hospitalisation Harry spent virtually every evening with John and Wendy, sharing their evening meals, watching television including his favourite British program “The Bill” and keeping up with family news.

During 2002 he was still able to enjoy such occasions as John and Wendy's 31st wedding anniversary at Glacier Rock Tea Rooms, Inman Valley (one of his and Mabel's favourite dining haunts), grand-daughter Valerie's birthday barbecue, the occasional lunches at Murphy's Pub at Goolwa with Pam and family, his half-brother Jack Soole's 80th birthday party in Adelaide, and grandson Christopher's 21st at the Tiggemann home at West Lakes.



Frank, Pam, Harry, John & Andrew at Harry's 86th birthday at Pam & Kevin's West Lakes home.

Christopher was asked some years ago if he had a special memory of his grandfather. He wrote *"One memory I will find hard to forget is when he was at West Lakes, around about 2002, and he was just about to head back to Victor. He looked quite tired from the day and also physically exhausted, as he could no longer get around very easily. He came over to me to say goodbye, while I was on the computer, and he asked me what I was doing. I was in the middle of a university assignment and I was using a Simulator Program to test Sine waves through a circuit. When I showed Grandpa what I was doing, the circuit I had built and the graph of the Sine wave's input and output, he lit up like I had awoken an old engineer from a 40 year sleep. For a minute or two he looked so full of life as we talked about the project."*



**Harry with his 3 grand-daughters at his 86th birthday in 2002.
L-R, Katherine & Jodie Tiggemann, Harry, Valerie Bubner(nee Baker)**

In August 2002 several of the family dined with Harry at the restaurant at the Anchorage, Victor Harbor, for the 52nd anniversary of the Bakers' arrival in South Australia.

In September 2002 he reluctantly relinquished his trusty Corolla, which he had been unable to drive for

many months. Until then Harry had clung to the hope of driving again one day, but he eventually realized that his beloved car was deteriorating. He had it cleaned and serviced, at

221,612 km, and Frank's wife Penny who then worked at CMI Toyota was able to sell it for him.

He was also shared Christmas 2002 with Pam and extended family, once again travelling with John and Wendy to Adelaide for the event, not realising it would be her last Christmas.

An unhappy day for Harry was Tuesday 13th May 2003 when Lodge of Peace No 89 held its final meeting, during which the Lodge Warrant was "surrendered" to Grand Lodge, after 83 years' service to Freemasonry and the community. Harry had always taken his Freemasonry obligations very seriously. So much of his life had been associated with that great organization that the Lodge of Peace closure was a great blow to him. It was originally consecrated in the year of the 1919 Peace Treaty, from which it took its name. A decline in membership, with the advancing age of many members, made the continued operation of No 89 unviable.

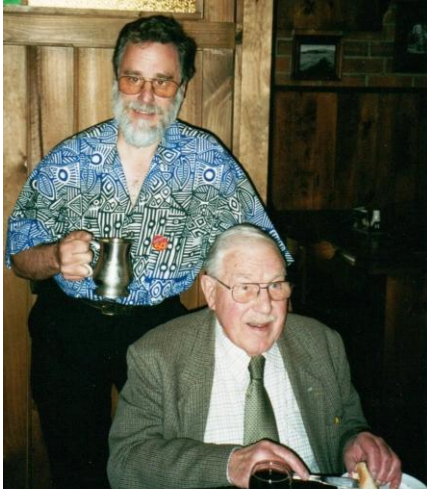
However, Encounter Daytime Lodge, of which Harry was also a member, continued to meet in the R.A.O.B. Hall in Leworthy Street. The lovely old stone Lodge of Peace building on Hindmarsh Road was sold to a local couple. Fortunately it was not demolished but became a quality retail gift and home-wares store "Cawthrons at the Lodge", retaining a reference to the name as well as the magnificent black and white marble pavement and ornate stone furniture in the Lodge Room. Since then it has seen a few more changes of use and ownership.

Early in 2003 the Soole family and Harry were notified by the management of Centennial Park Cemetery that the 25-year lease on the wall niche containing the ashes of Doll and Bill Soole was due to expire. Harry, and John Soole, opted to have their parents' ashes re-interred at St Augustine's, Victor Harbor, and for the memorial plaques to be placed above Mabel Baker's in the columbarium. This little ceremony took place on 6th August.

At this time Harry still attended National Trust meetings, contributing valuable input on various historical aspects of Victor Harbor. His family is proud of the commendations accorded him by some of the organisations to which he gave so much time and effort. He received several honours from the Australian Red Cross; his Long Service Medallion for being a long-term and steadfast blood donor, a Certificate of Recognition for Service to the Red Cross in 2001 (Year of the Volunteer), and in 2003 he was recognized for his past work as a Telcross Volunteer.

He received an Award of Merit from the Fleurieu Regional Tourist Association marking his nomination for "*Special Recognition*" for his work in "*striving for Tourism Excellence on the Fleurieu Peninsula*". He was a Life Member of several organisations including the R.S.P.C.A. which he had always supported heavily because of John Soole's association with the organization.

Pam's birthday was celebrated by 15 family and friends at the Grosvenor Hotel on 17th August. Her cancer had returned, but with a tenacity which could have been inherited in part from her mother, she was determined to face it head-on.



Harry at son Andrew's 50th birthday

Andrew's 50th birthday luncheon was shared in September 2003 with most of the family at Murphy's Pub, Goolwa.

Only a few days later Jodie broke the sad news to her grandfather of the irreconcilable breakdown of her marriage. Pam flew to Perth to help her daughter prepare her house for sale. On her return, Pam was hospitalized in St Andrew's Hospital, Adelaide. The cancer, despite her fierce fighting spirit, was attacking her on several fronts. Pam's children, nieces and nephews, her friends and all her relatives from all sides of her family visited as often as possible. Kevin stayed with her throughout her journey. Harry, with John and Wendy, managed to visit Pam several times before she passed away on 15th October 2003, in a quiet room overlooking the South Parklands.

Only those closest to Harry knew the depth of his grief. Physically it was a major effort for him to attend her funeral at Holy Trinity in Adelaide, but, with dignity, he did so. There were many, many mourners.

It was perhaps a measure of Harry's overwhelming sense of loss that he stopped keeping his meticulous diaries at the end of 2003.

At the same time that Katherine lost her mother, a new little life began for Katherine and Michael, though for Katherine it must have been tinged with sadness that her mother would not be there to share the joy of her first grandchild, expected in June 2004. Katherine's father Kevin invited close family, including Harry, to a private pre-wedding celebration dinner at the House of Chow restaurant in Adelaide on 8th February 2004. Katherine and Michael Capogreco flew to Hamilton Island, Queensland where they were married on 22nd February 2004.

His mobility decreased noticeably although he still took quiet pleasure in being taken to John and Wendy's for tea every evening. During the years Harry lived at Hill Court, John often drove him to Port Elliot where he loved to sit on a seat in the sun, enjoying a pasty and iced coffee with his eldest son, looking out across Horseshoe Bay. These were very precious times for both father and son, but as Harry's health declined the outings were no longer possible.

In May 2004 after a rapidly worsening medical crisis and an overnight emergency Harry allowed himself to be taken to the South Coast Private Hospital. Although his condition stabilized it was obvious that even with the help of carers and family he would no longer be able to retain his independent living status.

After a month a new room, the former respite care room, was made available for him at the freshly re-furbished Ross Robertson Memorial Care Centre (ECH) in Cornhill Road, Victor Harbor. He took with him his big green recliner chair, which Pam had helped him choose when he first moved into his unit at Hill Court in 1998, and his own bedside cabinet along with some of his family photos and other small precious things, to make it seem more like home.



One tiny book is, as far as is known, the sole surviving link to his paternal grandfather; the little “*Primitive Methodist Hymn Book*”, cost – two shillings. On the flyleaf in a rounded hand is “George Baker – Chilham (?) – Lees 1874”. A preface written by one John Flesher has had the “Flesher” crossed out and substituted with “Soole” in a childish hand – some “doodling” by his half-brother John at some stage, perhaps?

He and Mabel had built up an extensive library of quality literature including many reference books, novels and Churchill’s essays on World War II. He gave almost all of these to his third son Andrew for safe-keeping. Always generous, Harry said ‘I want everything else to go to the family. I’d like to see as much of my stuff used as possible.’ Several of his artworks, including one of his own paintings, were hung in his room at the Centre, and what the rest of the family could not accommodate was placed in storage. The “luckiest mirror around” - that old survivor of war-time bombings, a journey to the other side of the world, and several house moves - went to Harry’s grand-daughter Katherine Capogreco (nee Tiggemann) to be hung in her and Michael’s home on Kensington Road.

Among the select few books he retained were his Holy Bible, the Oxford Dictionary and a fragile, well-thumbed comb-bound volume titled *By Singleness of Purpose* - issued (August 1945) by J. Stone & Company, Limited, Engineers and Founders, Deptford and Charlton (printed by Adams Bros. & Shardlow, Ltd., London). This book details in some depth the engineering exploits of Stones during World War II as well as the history of the company. Harry had served his apprenticeship with Stones and had virtually given them his war service; he always remembered them with fondness and pride.

He enjoyed being able to converse with his sons John and Andrew on engineering matters. In later years Chris Tiggemann wrote ‘...one thing I am sure of is that I received my engineering mind from Grandpa Baker. It makes me proud of being his grandson every day. I hope my

graduation in Bachelor of Electrical and Electronic Engineering with Honours from University of Adelaide in December 2004 brought him some pride in the last years of his life.'

Harry was indeed proud of his grandson's achievement, particularly as he had had to cope with the stresses of university study and examinations at the same time as his mother's illness and death. Christopher's graduation photograph was displayed in Harry's room.

Harry was also pleased with his grandson-in-law Graeme Bubner's interest in metalwork and engineering, the main topic of conversation when Graeme visited. Engineering had been the perfect career for a man of Harry's calm rationality, the ability to remain objective, his organizational and liaison skills and a perfectionist's attention to detail. He also enjoyed visits from his son-in-law Kevin, who had a penchant for numbers and mathematics.

Some other books very dear to Harry were Frank and Joan Shaw's three separate compilations (published by Echo Press) of personal anecdotes of the British people about their war-time experiences on the home front. All proceeds from *We Remember the Blitz* (1990), *We Remember the Battle of Britain* (1990) and *We Remember D-Day* (1994) went to the British Legion and to the Normandy Veterans. The last-named book contains an article written by his cousin Peggy Hart who served as a member of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) in the Cambridge Military Hospital at Aldershot, as mentioned earlier in this story.



On 30th June, 2004 he was delighted to become a great-grandfather for the first time when Isabella Pamela Capogreco was born to his grand-daughter Katherine and her husband Michael. Four months later Harry managed to attend Isabella's christening service at St Patrick's Church, Adelaide on 17th October 2004, but was too tired to stay for the reception at Ayres House afterwards. It had been an exhausting journey to the city for him in a wheelchair

in a poorly-sprung "access" cab.

In spite of his mobility problems, with help from all concerned Harry was able to celebrate his 88th birthday in 2004 with his usual culinary enjoyment, surrounded by close friends and family, at the local Hotel Crown.

The family Christmas feast was held for the first time at Valerie and Graeme Bubner's home in Mt Barker in 2004. Harry's eldest grandson Mark, a professional taxi-driver, did not want his

grandpa to miss out on Christmas dinner with the family, so he drove from Adelaide to Victor Harbor in his own car to take Harry to Mt Barker for the day. Mark's big Ford was easier for the frail old man to get into than John and Wendy's smaller car. Although he told nursing home staff that he had enjoyed Christmas Day, and appreciated the efforts made by the family on his behalf, this was the last time Harry ventured out of the nursing home. After that, he used to sometimes say 'They [members of his family] know where to find me.'

That Christmas, one of his friends gave him a little porcelain bulldog, a symbol, he said, of Harry's tenacity and perseverance. Harry was moved by the kind thoughts behind the simple gift.

Some twenty years after Harry's retirement from the Electricity Trust of South Australia in 1976, the Greenhill Road building where he had worked for so long was declared unsafe because of the use of asbestos in its construction. The building was completely gutted and rebuilt as a luxury 140-unit apartment block named "Air Apartments". By coincidence, his son-in-law Kevin Tiggemann purchased one of these apartments off the plan - on the 9th floor, where Harry's office had been.

In the meantime, since Pam's death, Kevin had met a lovely lady Annalisa. In another coincidence, her father knew Harry from the days when he was an inspector for ETSA – Annalisa's father had been on the receiving end of one of Harry's meticulous job inspections, and well remembered him – when the two gentlemen were "introduced" at the couple's celebrations, the mutual responses were courteous, if a little cool!

Kevin and Annalisa married at the new Registry Office in Grenfell Street on 30th July 2004 and afterwards had a quiet informal reception at the inner-city Historian Hotel. They lived in an older house for a while, and then moved to their new apartment in 2005. Here they had the same spectacular views that Harry enjoyed while working in the old ETSA Eastwood building. Kevin had meanwhile sold the West Lakes property.

Harry's 89th birthday in September 2005 passed him by almost without his noticing as he was extremely ill in hospital with severe gastro-enteritis. But Harry recovered and returned home to Ross Robbie to look forward to the birth of his second great-grandchild, born 5th November 2005 - Carmen Grace Bubner, first child of John Baker's daughter Valerie and her husband Graeme. Harry was thrilled when the proud new parents brought little Carmen to see her great-grandfather at only nine days of age. She lay contentedly on his quilt as he reached out to touch her fingers, a quiet link that bridged their ages.

Sadly, he was not to make it to his 90th. In late March 2006 he fell ill with a serious infection, a legacy of his stay in hospital six months previously. Although heavily sedated he was still able to appreciate Grand Lodge's recognition of Harry's long association with Freemasonry when he was awarded his Fifty Year Veteran's Jewel, dated 3rd March 2006, presented to him at his bedside only a few days prior to his death.

In the early hours of Friday, 31st March 2006, after a two week illness during which all the grand old patriarch's family came to say their goodbyes, Harry passed away peacefully in the Ross Robertson Memorial Care Centre.

Harry James Baker had enjoyed a wonderfully full and interesting life in two countries. He and Mabel had produced four children, five grand-children and two great-great-grandchildren.

About 100 mourners attended his funeral at St Augustine's Anglican Church in Victor Harbor at 3 pm on the 10th April, where Kevin Tiggemann read the eulogy from a speech Harry himself had written to read at one of his many community groups in 1992, the year after Mabel died, and which was found among his effects. It summarised, succinctly, Harry's life up to that point in a way which only he himself could have done.

Appropriately, one of his former work colleagues, Ern Robson, also spoke, giving public voice to Harry's quiet achievements with the Electricity Trust of South Australia. Outside the church, Lodge members formed a guard of honour for the passage of his coffin to the hearse. It was a fitting farewell.

A wake was held in the church hall, where nine years earlier Harry's 80th birthday had been celebrated with such joy.

At 4 o'clock on 9th May, John, Frank and Andrew gathered at St Augustine's for a short service by Father Dean Barker for the internment of Harry's ashes in the garden close to Mabel's. Four Singapore orchids – one for each of his children – were placed. The plaque, which reads simply "*Harry James Baker 8th September 1916 – 31st March 2006*" was affixed to the memorial wall together with those of Mabel, his mother Doll and his step-father Bill Soole. Harry's passing did not go unnoticed by the community. A Masonic Lodge of Remembrance was held for him on 21st August 2006 by Encounter Daytime Lodge.



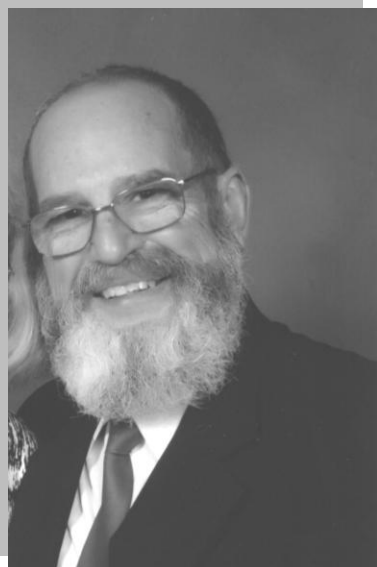
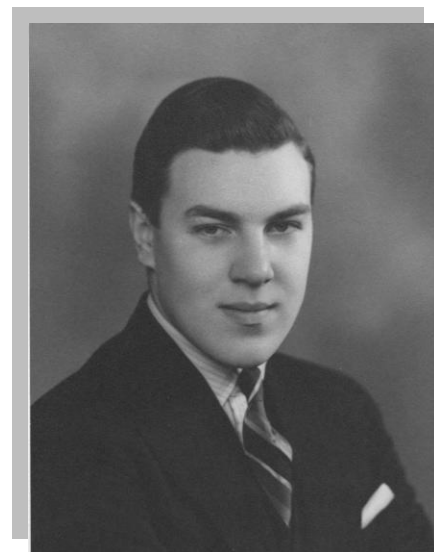
And on 16th October a memorial plaque on the *Solway* anchor display outside the Encounter Coast Discovery Centre was



unveiled by the National Trust. In this posthumous tribute to Harry, he was described in “The Times” as an *“intensely community-minded man Heavily involved with the anchor display, designing the layout, choosing the boulders, and supervising its placement.”* Wal Grant, a friend of Harry’s and fellow National Trust member, said that Harry had given professional and active support to many Trust projects and had served as a committee member, deputy chairman and branch chairman. It was a public declaration of what his family had long known. Harry, J. Baker – the anchor of the Baker family.

George Samuel Baker and his son Harry Samuel Baker were born in the 19th century. Then his son Harry James Baker, and in turn the next male generations of John James Baker and then Mark James Baker, were born in the 20th century. Mark’s son Ayden Baker was born in the 21st century and Harry James attained 89 years in the 21st century. The Baker family has been traced back to the early 1700’s, but with authenticated records it has indeed reached out across three centuries.

**George
Samuel Baker**
*(no photo
available)*
**Harry Samuel,
Harry James,
John James,
Mark James,
and
Ayden
Francis ...**
*six generations
of Bakers*



A GRAND-DAUGHTER'S TRIBUTE

I remember the little things about Grandpa.

He was a proud, well-presented and ponderous man,
carefully measuring every word he spoke.
He was usually impeccably dressed in his sports-jacket,
and waistcoat that Grandma knitted from homespun wool,
topped with signature beret.

I remember as a child, riding in his car – the smell of upholstery,
the whine of gears, and the sound of the dashboard clock;
his answering machine message – the most deliberate and
carefully stated message anyone had ever heard;
his half-sorted piles of papers on the dining room table;
little mustard jars that Grandma made;
seemingly endless paintings on his walls which I will remember forever;
unfinished paintings of his own, carefully sketched
over long periods of time;
the drone of cricket and tennis commentary
on the television in summer;
the perfectly engineered pyramid of wood and twigs in the corner
fireplace, ready for next winter from the end of last;
his mowing another 2mm off the grass that was kept neatly short;
his trusty set of Feeler gauges in his pocket that knew
every gap between every perfect tooth....

.....and always his gentle voice, dry peck on the cheek,
"Hello dear", as we saw him every Saturday night after Grandma
passed on, for roast lamb or beef at mum and dad's house.
Bringing Riesling and a dessert with him,
he was always quietly happy just to spend time with us.

These are some of the things I remember of Grandpa Baker.

(Valerie Bubner)